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The SMART SET

*A Magazine of
Cleverness*



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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF
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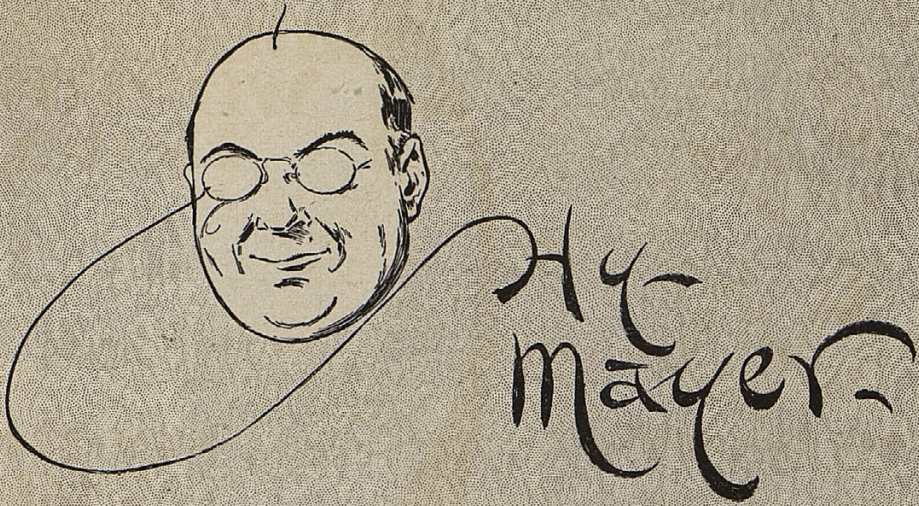
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THE SMART SET

SMART—Clever; witty; acute; quick; lively.—*Webster's Dictionary.*

THE TWENTY-THREE DAYS OF NAZIMOV

By W. L. George

ALREADY the few passengers had dispersed in noisy groups owning many children who, proudly assured, noisily wrangled for the privilege of carrying hat boxes, baskets of groceries or of fish. Solitary women passed, also laden with packages, while here and there stalked by a tall and dignified official in uniform anxious to ignore his umbrella or his fishing rod. For a moment John Hulder stood looking beyond the broken-down old carriage, in every corner of which, save a little space for him, was piled his neat American luggage. In the blaze of August light, under the crashing purple of the sky, his possessions seemed to stare, the brass bindings of his trunks and their scarlet lettering to have gained violence of color and of form in the blazing air of the Bavarian summer.

Though this was a weekday, little Ammenberg was not sleepy as would have been an Italian town. There was an air of business about the little fruit-shop and its show of apricots, peaches and ruddy apples; about the post office with perpetually active doors under the royal scutcheon; about the terrace of the Hotel Schwaben, where sat a few middle-aged Germans before steaming coffee or tall mugs of pale beer. A glow

of heat seemed to seize Hulder, to penetrate through the loose gray flannels to his skin. He had a sensation of well-being, for this heat was less than the one he had just left in Switzerland. And yet it left him so limp that he started when at last the coachman bent toward him a sunburnt old face with an enormous grizzled mustache and asked: "Where does the gentleman wish to drive?"

Hulder did not reply for a moment. He was amused because of *die Herrschaft* after having in various European countries been "His Lordship," "His Grace," "His High Nobility," but at once embarrassment seized him, for he did not know what he wanted to do. He looked about him, wondered whether he should put up at the Hotel Schwaben or select its rival over the way, the Wangenhof. But both of these, facing southwest, looked intolerably stuffy. In his good, precise German he questioned the coachman, pointing to the little hills above the town.

The driver was not uncertain. Excitedly pointing with his whip, he declared that not much more than a mile off was a wonderful hotel, the Kaiserhof.

"Well," said Hulder briefly, with the sharpness of the irresolute taking a decision, "to the Kaiserhof then."

As he sank down into the dusty cushions, and the horse began to move with immense deliberation, he wondered what he was doing at Ammenberg and what he wanted to do. It did not look like an exciting place. No doubt on Sundays it would be gay enough—if he wanted to be gay.

As brightness fell from the air, Hulder found himself weary. A Bostonian, aged about thirty, he had studied the law because his parents considered that he ought to apologize to the United States for not having to earn a living. His apology made and his parents dead, he had found out little by little that the quiet solitudes of Boston bored him as much as the occasionally feverish agitation of its copper market. He had found the West too large and too rough, New York too shrill; for a moment the peace of Georgian England transplanted into Louisiana had held him, but only for a moment. In Louisiana he realized by contrast that there was very little room in America for a man with nothing to do. He only wanted to live.

As a natural consequence of this feeling he had sailed for Europe, and had for a while been charmed by the capacity of the older races to do nothing with wonderful, sleepy intentness. And so, for two years, he had progressed round the Continent from London, its Trafalgar Square hotels, its Chelsea salons, to Paris and its hysterical glitter, to sturdy Berlin trying so hard to be vicious and gloomily conscious that it was born respectable. It had not been very adventurous: he had wandered in Spain and encountered nothing worse than insects; he had ridden across the Abruzzi without being held to ransom by brigands and, even in Russia, he had never been suspected of advanced ideas. And so he was a little disappointed in the romance of life as he lay back in the old carriage that now crawled up the hill at less than a foot pace, the horse impatiently biting at the flies, first on his right shoulder, then on his left. Hulder reflected upon this: the double strain in his temperament, this strange desire to take no active part in life, and this hope that something outside him would hap-

pen to stimulate that life and make it vivid.

"I don't think it's going to be very vivid here," he remarked aloud to himself. "I ought to have known better than ask that waiter."

This opinion was strengthened as the carriage passed between the elaborate villas of the Munich merchants, then over the gaily painted bridge that spanned the little river, by the palisades beyond which were the trim gardens bursting with clematis and night primroses. Yes, that Munich waiter who, in reply to Hulder's question as to whether there were in the neighborhood some beautiful country places where it would not be too hot, had named Ammenberg, might have been happy enough here but—Hulder sighed. After all, what did it matter? Haste or sloth, it was much the same in the end.

Now they were well above the little town. Turning back, he could see the villas clustering on the slopes down to the edge of the lake. Truculent, among them stood the Schloss, no doubt the center of government, and the church with the red-tiled roof and the amazing swelling in the middle of the spire that looked so exactly like a large onion. A pleasant place enough, especially that day when no color could shrink into grayness under the enormous pummeling of the sun.

A turn of the road, a little downhill, the scraping of the brakes—that made Hulder smile, for he was not yet accustomed to drivers who never control a horse by means of the reins—then again flatness, the horse suddenly inspired by insults to arrive in style—the coachman turning in his seat, excitedly pointing with his whip toward a large solitary building. Among the rumble of the wheels Hulder could distinguish only the word "Kaiserhof." He nodded languidly, and yet was amused to feel some slight excitement: a new name, a new place, there was always something exciting in that. He smiled, wondered whether this proved him more American than he knew.

Within half an hour Hulder was in possession of his new quarters, a bed-

room on the second floor, to which was attached a little sitting room abutting on a balcony. Far below him lay the valley. Beyond the Schloss, its girdling valleys and the church, which he christened St. Onions, lay the lake, and beyond that, sharply outlined like gray lace, the length of peaks of the Bavarian Alps. A content filled him, for this landscape had nobility. A great sense of eternity was about it: he could feel that there had always been an Alp, that the Alp would endure forever, and for a second he was glad that he had come to Munich's Sunday playground, to this singular Kaiserhof. For the Kaiserhof was indeed a curious place; its august name notwithstanding, sheds and stables showed that it had once been a farm. Rising a little in the world, it had turned into an inn; then two stories had been added, four cupolas had been built on each corner, and the whole had been painted a delicate shade of salmon pink relieved at every molding in vermilion. The front garden, half covered by an awning for bad weather, was occupied by little tables at which, most hours of the day, a countryman in Bavarian national costume, a ruck-sacked tourist or a forester could be seen slowly eating and drinking. The Kaiserhof was homely, and even its unexpected ostentations, its self-recommendation in the shape of automobile and cycle club boards, failed to make it anything but homely. As the afternoon dragged on, and very slowly the sun began to sink, spreading gold and purple over the mountains and darkening to black the dull waters of the lake, Hulder felt more keenly the oppression of the place.

The inhabitants of the hotel did not seem thus oppressed. There were a good many of them, mainly women and children sent to take the air while husbands and fathers worked in Munich until the Saturday afternoon. Long before supper time, when Hulder had aimlessly gone in and out of the hotel to walk through the steep meadows to the church and to see the abominable frescoes and ornaments of which it was so proud, he had realized this. There was a young girl, in a dress of blue print

spattered with bunches of red and green flowerets, in charge of two little girls; there was a newly married couple, she very small and dark, he very handsome, very fair, and showing a strip of milk-white calf above the short gray woolen socks which he wore in fanciful imitation of the Bavarian peasant; there was an old gentleman who looked like a retired general and was probably a post office official having a fortnight's holiday; and there were children. Children! The Kaiserhof, Hulder thought, was nothing but a *crèche*. It contained quite twenty children, fortunately quiet, respectable German children who knew that most things were *verboten*, and made no attempt to do them, but, to the end of his stay, Hulder never quite found out to whom they belonged. Some of them, a maid told him within an hour of his arrival, belonged to Frau Pettinger, on the first floor, but as there seemed to be a perpetual circulation of children between the various apartments, and as the Pettingers had but two rooms, it was quite impossible to tell whether the abundant lady housed a dozen of her own or merely held out to all small creatures an affectionate, large red hand.

No, it was not very promising. Quite apart from the fact that the whole of the premises were intimately pervaded by a curious and pungent smell, almost certainly lavender, the supper which was offered Hulder at seven o'clock was as bad as any he had ever refused in an Italian town. It was worse: in the old days in America, when he was liberal-minded, he had not believed in the fondness of the Germans for pig; he now had to confess that this was no fable, for the menu of the Kaiserhof seemed compounded entirely with allotropic forms of the animal. And there was red cabbage, fiercely vinegary. And a fruit tart, the massive dough of which could have served as a rock on which to rear the ambition of the fatherland. Alone the perfect iced beer, like pale sunshine, enabled Hulder to get through his meal. His companions at the long table did not amuse him much. He had been placed at this because he was alone.

The little tables were occupied by parties, and at his own were mainly the solitaires of the hotel: the old official, a middle-aged couple as large as the Pettingers but childless, two valiantly touristic young men, an elderly lady and, by his side, a young woman to whom he at first paid very little attention, so exasperated was he by the badness of the food, and so hypnotized by the way in which an old gentleman juggled with his knife pieces of meat.

Suddenly the young woman at his side spoke. He started and as, in reply to the remark he had not understood, he said, "*Bitte?*" he looked at her. He saw a rather strange face, which he vaguely summed up as foreign. He observed very black hair and large, steady gray eyes under high-arched brows. No more, for his neighbor explained that she wanted salt. He handed it to her, observed the great length and fineness of her hands, the skin of which had an unusual dead white quality. She thanked him, bent down toward her plate, averted her head a little as if to show that she had no wish to carry the conversation any further. As the dinner went on, very long and not rendered less wearisome by the chatter that came from every table, and the occasional shrillness of children's voices that came from the amalgamated company of infants whom Frau Pettinger seemed to control, Hulder found himself watching his neighbor and hoping that she would turn her face toward him. He had seen enough to know that hers was an interesting countenance. Little by little, by craning forward and quickly looking sideways, he discovered that there was hardly any color in the dead white of her cheeks, that her mouth was small, very red, almost purplish and rather pouting. But he observed another peculiarity, a very sharply pointed chin, and something which he did not at once realize about the cheeks but which he later found to be a Scotch height of cheekbones. A little later in the meal he was able to offer her another condiment, was thanked, ventured to suggest that the room was oppressively hot. She agreed without looking up. And when, a little

later, determined to make her look at him, he dropped his napkin and picked it up, apologizing as he did so, the large gray eyes rested upon him only for a moment, and almost as if they did not see him but were occupied with some other object invisible to him and clear to them.

She rose early from the table and, as Hulder's eyes followed her to the window, he was conscious of something peculiar in her attitude. She was rather short, broad-shouldered, full-bosomed; there was about her something reposeful and self-reliant. He guessed her to be twenty-five or six. And now, as she looked through the window toward the darkling sky in which still flamed the last lights of a rutilant sunset, she seemed concentrated and intent. Quite intimately Hulder knew that she was waiting for somebody, and he was surprised, as his mind leapt to husband or lover, to find himself touched by disappointment. Why should he be disappointed? Why should he be in the least interested in the relations of a casual neighbor?

No doubt, he thought next day, it was because Ammenberg did not appear likely to yield him much interest. There had been a storm in the night, and now it was cooler. He had walked down to the lake, been pestered by boatmen to row or sail; he had read the "*Münchner Nachrichten*"; he had bought a peach. Nothing had happened, and at lunch the place by his side was empty. Cautious inquiries from the serving maid drew out that his neighbor's name was Nazimov, that she was a Russian, and that she had that day gone to Munich to meet her brother who was coming to stay at the hotel. A satisfaction came to Hulder out of these details. A brother, he thought, was better than either husband or lover. Then he laughed at himself; as he walked, puffing at his pipe, through the flower-spangled meadows that lay right and left of the road to Starnhofen, he told himself not to be a fool. That evening, when again the place beside him was empty, he saw that Miss Nazimov was seated at a little table with a strange,

slight young man whose features were as elastic as her own seemed rigid; yet he could not escape his slight feeling of disappointment. It translated itself into emotion. Often he found himself looking toward the table, but his glance never crossed with that of Miss Nazimov. He could see her lips slowly moving as she talked, but she did not raise her eyes toward him; all that he could do was to admire the length of the long black lashes that made a shadow on her cheeks. More often his eyes met those of the young man, for these were roving, active, as if his curiosity were continually stimulated, and as if nothing that he saw could satisfy it. Two or three times during dinner he looked at the American, and Hulder was amused, also perhaps a little disquieted by the variations of the young man's expression: most of his glances were casual, but once Hulder thought that the young man smiled at him, while, just before he stood up to go outside and smoke over his coffee, he was sure that he could trace upon the young man's features an expression of extreme malevolence.

It was all, he thought as he went out, rather curious, and therefore rather interesting. He wondered whether these people would not prove disappointing, as so many had done in so many European hotels. Still, he was glad to be even so far interested.

II

"WHAT are you staring at?"

Hulder turned round suddenly at the sound of the high, not unmelodious voice, which he instinctively knew to be that of the peculiar young man. He hardly knew how to reply to the unceremonious question, and his embarrassment was not lessened by the sharp, almost truculent tone in which it had been couched, nor by the young man's strange appearance. He could see him distinctly enough in the strong light of the two lamps which surmounted the gate of the Kaiserhof. He was about the same height as his sister, but much slighter, and Hulder observed, almost

with amusement, that he very closely resembled her: black hair, arched eyebrows, large gray eyes, pointed chin, all the features were alike, but an untidy mass of hair fell over the young man's left eye; a little black mustache continually moved, as if the lip from which it grew were nervously twitching. And the gray eyes were not steady but anxious, questioning. The general impression in the American's mind, one of nervous weakness, was carried out by his companion's unexpected clothing. Over a jacket, which he now saw was velvet, fell the rough folds of a frieze cape; from the loose, soft collar flowed a black silk tie, so untidily knotted that one end had leapt from the waistcoat. And, ridiculous to think, as the young man stood, the coat outspread because his hands were resting on his hips, Hulder was reminded of a large, excited crow.

"Well," repeated the young man, a little angrily, "what are you staring at?"

His German was almost faultless, but still rather peculiar.

"Staring at?" said Hulder vaguely, taking the cigar from his teeth. "I don't know. The moon." He nodded toward the horizon.

The young man took a step toward him, leant against the parapet which separated the garden from the road.

"Ah!" he murmured. "The moon."

For a moment his gaze fixed upon the planet, which hung very low in a dark blue sky, the blue-black sky of the Southern heavens in the late evening. Against this deep screen the moon floated like a brilliant orange lamp, rather as a glowing circle of wedged yellow, orange and salmon pink. Hulder was no longer looking at the moon, but at the young man rapt in contemplation, almost adoring.

"The moon!" repeated the young man. "Yes, she's worth staring at. She's one of the eternal things. She makes one believe in eternity, because it's so hard to think that one thing can be eternal and not another. It is so difficult to believe in eternity, don't you think?"

"I don't know," said Hulder con-

fusedly. "They teach us at school that we shall live again and—"

"Tush," said the young man angrily.

"Well," said Hulder, "I haven't thought much about eternity, you see."

There was a long pause, during which a variety of expressions succeeded one another upon the young man's features.

"No," he said. Then, very slowly: "I suppose a man like you wouldn't think much about eternity. You don't need to. No, you don't need to," he repeated more loudly, as Hulder raised a protesting hand to show that he disliked the imputation of thoughtlessness. "You don't need to because death for you is so far away that you never think of it, while I—"

He paused, and Hulder felt disquieted in the presence of impending revelation. The young man's tone changed. Hulder thought of a swerving horse.

"Fiodor Kyrilovitch Nazimov. And you?"

Hulder gathered that the young man had introduced himself.

"John Hulder," he said briefly. "That's my name."

He sought for some commonplace topic, but Nazimov forestalled him.

"John Hulder," he repeated. "Oh, I knew you were English when I saw you. That's why you never think of eternity."

Hulder smiled. "Perhaps the English don't," he said. "But I might, because, you see, I'm American. You're wrong, you see, Fiodor Kyrilovitch."

A smile creased Nazimov's mouth as he heard the familiar appellation. "Oh!" he said. "You know how to address a Russian! You know Russia?"

"Yes," said Hulder, "a little."

"H'm," said Nazimov sulkily, "you know Russia!"

"Yes."

"I suppose you know it like all Americans. Samovars, vodka, Tolstoy, Russian dances, knout and the Czar—" He suddenly broke into excellent English. "And all that sort of rot."

"Oh!" said Hulder, amused, though his tone was offensive. "You speak English, too?"

"Yes," said Nazimov. "I was in

England some years. There was no other place to go to after I had said that the Grand Duchess Antonia dyed her hair, or something like that."

"So you're a Nihilist," said Hulder, laughing.

"One doesn't become a Nihilist because one says that a Grand Duchess dyes her hair," Nazimov replied, laughing, too. "Still, it's very awkward in Russia if one says that sort of thing."

Just as Hulder was opening his mouth to resume the conversation, Nazimov turned away from him and again began to gaze at the high-hung fiery pan of the moon, as if he had forgotten all about the American.

"The moon," he murmured. "Like the single eye of a cyclops with a dark blue brow—too far away for anything but tolerance, too cold to warm, too selfish to do anything save steal such warmth as it can from the sun, too feminine to give off any light save that which it reflects from a brighter star—hateful, abominable, loathsome moon." His tone changed, suddenly became thoughtful: "And yet, there is no moon and no earth, no moon save in the imagination of men who think there are such things. Life is but a dream, a nightmare of some giant sleeping in the void—and I the soul of that giant, wandering while he sleeps, haunted by phantoms and phantasies. It is I, that flying soul, whose distraught imagination creates star and moon and man and Hotel Kaiserhof for him to dwell in; and when he and I have dreamed long enough, and we awake because I dream no more for him, I, the giant, shall be no more. I, the dreamer, am only a dream."

He paused, and there was a long silence while Hulder struggled to piece together in his mind such philosophy as remained to him from his college course. He understood Nazimov, and a faint memory of Berkeley came to him, but he was deflected from this purely intellectual exercise by the interest aroused in him by the passion, half of pain and half of anger, that was in Nazimov's voice. And then, quite suddenly, while he was wondering what to reply to the extraor-

dinary tirade, he heard from the hotel steps a cry of, "Fedka!"

Nazimov's features became alert. He cried out something in Russian and, at once, running down the steps, Hulder saw the sister. She came toward them with swift, long steps, and Hulder was struck by her expression, half-anxious, half-angry, by the chiding, disdainful tone in which she addressed her brother, and the dominating, motherly way in which she wound round his neck and mouth a knitted red and green comforter. She was still, Hulder gathered from her tone, expostulating with him, and Hulder, guessing from Nazimov's thin frame that he was delicate and should not stand in the open at night, threw out a few words of apology. At once the girl turned on him.

"How could you do such a thing?" she asked in German. "Can't you see he's delicate?"

"I'm sure I'm very sorry," said Hulder.

"Sorry!" she repeated scornfully. "I'd have thought that you'd have had more sense than that. Come along, Fedka; you must have something hot and go to bed."

"To bed at half past nine?" said Nazimov, smiling. "Oh, Olichka, you can't mean that, my first night; and I've been enjoying myself with Mr. Hulder."

"Have you?" said the girl more gently. She threw Hulder a glance in which was less hostility, but merely doubt. "I'm glad you've had a nice talk. But really, Fedichka, you must be careful, and Mr.—Mr.—"

"Hulder," said Nazimov. . . . "This is my sister, Olga Kyrilovna."

She bowed a little stiffly, and for a second Hulder wished that he were not too self-conscious to follow the Russian custom. He would have liked to bend down and kiss that very long fine hand. But Nazimov and his sister were not shy. Now that Olga realized her brother's pleasure in the American's company, a change seemed to have come over her. She smiled, and her teeth were beautiful.

It was a peculiar atmosphere they made, these two, as they laughed, nes-

tled against each other, chattered excitedly in soft, bell-like Russian, or broke into German, or, for his benefit, into English. Olga had apparently forgotten her anger. Her mood had changed swift as the cloud which had just fled as a film of blue gauze across the molten gold of the moon. But she was still watching over her brother, compelling him to draw close the wings of the cape, and winding more tightly over his mouth the length of the comforter. At last she once more declared that Fiodor must go to bed. As she took him away, they were laughing. And again, an hour later, when Hulder met her in the hall as she carried a glass of hot milk, when he bade her "Good night," she smiled at him.

"You know," she said confidentially, "Fiodor seems to like you."

"Oh, so do I like him," said Hulder, a little awkwardly, for outspoken emotion disturbed him.

"I'm so glad," said Olga. "You know," she added seriously, "he isn't very well. I must be very careful."

III

It was perhaps because Hulder felt little interest in his fellow guests that he concentrated upon the Nazimovs. It is true that, on the second day, the retired official had taken him apart to tell him that it was a pity Bismarck was not alive to deal with the Social Democrats; and Frau Pettinger had asked him whether he was married and had children, adding, as a rider to his reply, some surprised and disapproving remarks because he was neither a husband nor a father. But there was something more appalling, because more mysterious, about the young Russians. More and more they appeared to Hulder as lovers rather than as brother and sister, and he was not surprised to find that they were twins: their similarity of feature was evidence enough. But Olga seemed a mother as well as a sister; while Fiodor was willing enough to leave the hotel with Hulder, or to stand alone at the edge of the creeper-grown quarry

near by, there apparently to meditate, Olga was agitated when she did not see him. Suddenly, in the midst of a conversation, her look would wander; she would become curiously thoughtful, brooding; her eyes would shine with entranced intensity. And, quite as suddenly, without even a word of apology, she would leap up from her seat, and Hulder could hear her run up the stairs, or across the gravel in the front garden, as if she was anxious and seeking. And she watched over Fiodor materially as well as emotionally, sometimes to his annoyance, often to his amusement. When she swaddled him up in the comforter, or demanded for him the liver or wing of a chicken, or practically lifted him out of his chair and into another because there was a draught, Fiodor would throw his American friend a humorous glance of self-pity. But, on the whole, theirs was a relation of tender intimacy: seldom did they address each other as Olga or Fiodor; it was always Fedia or, more tenderly, Fedichka; and he caressingly called her Olichka, sometimes, in a soft, melting voice, Olusha. The Russian diminutives, expressive of all grades of love, dallying or anger, were their everyday language. Tender they were, both of them, though sometimes combative and angry, when it was the contemptuous Fedka or Olka came, sharp as lashes.

Hulder was now their chosen companion. On the third morning Fiodor came to him, laid upon the table two beautiful long hands, and gazed at him with immense, pathetic gray eyes. Hulder looked up, smiling, waiting for some poetic thought, and Fiodor said:

"This place smells like a dustheap; come with us into the town."

Before Hulder could reply, Olga had joined them. Her face was impassive, but she looked at her brother, at his animated eyes, and a sweet, slow smile immediately lit up her features. They walked down the hill, those three, Fiodor talking all the time, ramblingly, sometimes profound, then suddenly commonplace, but always nervously intent.

"See, there are the mountains, there just beyond the pines, blue today—no,

gray-blue like the wing of a heron—that's the Wetterspitze—three thousand meters high, so Baedeker says." He laughed. "Why don't they label the mountains—with their height and (a wicked smile at Hulder) with their price delivered post free in New York State?"

"Oh, we don't buy mountains," said Hulder; "we've got as many as we want."

They laughed together. Fiodor stuck to his point. "Our mountains are more historic than the Rockies. Don't laugh, Hulder; one of your millionaires will buy the St. Bernard district one day and transplant it to Ohio, and build a house on it and call it Napoleon Villa."

Then, before Hulder could reply, Fiodor was being jocular at the expense of little Ammenberg, which they were now entering. All three, that morning, felt very young, ready to be amused by the villas of the Munich merchants, their extraordinary roofs copied from pagodas, and their delightful blending of the Swiss chalet with the Spanish colonnade. Indeed, it was a humorous district, for one very rich Munich merchant had been carried away by his business instincts: at the wrought iron gates of his summer palace, beyond which spangled rose bushes and passionate clematis fought for predominance, some ungovernable passion in his soul had compelled him to put up a large board advertising that his name was Holtzen, and that his bath fittings were the greatest in the world.

The talk was all Fiodor's, for Hulder tried vainly to draw Olga into conversation; in his presence she seemed to want to remain silent. She was courteous, she replied, she smiled, but it could not be said that she talked. Eye and hand, she was bound to her brother, and tactfully so, for when, at a short hill, she murmured to Fiodor, "Give me your arm, Fedia," Hulder observed that, unobtrusively, she did not hang upon that arm but supported it.

They shopped. At the bootmaker's there was a cheerful scene, for Olga, who wanted sandals, found it quite impossible to fit her long, arched foot into the shoes destined for Munich ladies. Not a shoe that was not three sizes too broad,

if it fitted her length! And she smiled a little proudly when Hulder suggested that none save a bootmaker who had made for greyhounds could hope to fit her slenderness.

They bought those things that tourists need: picture postcards, newspapers, cigarettes of a special brand for Fiodor. Hulder would have been filled with satisfaction if, at the post office, something had not happened. Quite suddenly, in the midst of the sunlit street, Fiodor stopped. He seemed to choke; his face reddened, and then, with his sister's arm about his shoulders, he was coughing, coughing horribly, as if the spasm tore at something deep in his body. While his eyes still stared, Olga pressed her handkerchief against his mouth. For a moment Hulder lost sight of the convulsed face as Olga's strong shoulders turned toward him, but he had time to see, when at last the coughing subsided, that there was blood upon the handkerchief.

Hulder stood by them, anxiously. Fiodor threw the American a very soft smile, said something in a whisper which seemed to make Olga's features into a rigid white mask.

"What?" asked Hulder. "What do you say, Fiodor Kyrilovitch?"

Olga raised her hand, but already and quite loud, Fiodor, still smiling, had said: "143."

"Hush! Hush!" came Olga's low voice. "For shame, Fedichka, how can you say such things? It isn't true."

"It is true, Olusha," murmured Fiodor, "but what does it matter? Come, Hulder, I'm strong enough to walk up the hill."

As the American accompanied them toward the Kaiserhof, he was wondering and charmed. Puzzled by this incomprehensible figure, 143, and the effect it had, he was charmed by the glowing tenderness that had been in Olga's voice. He could not shake off the impression, even though, in half an hour, he was playing a game of billiards with Fiodor. He played well, the Russian badly. Olga, her hands folded in her lap, watched them from a window, smiling, her gaze upon the American,

very gentle and responsive to every one of her brother's words. But Fiodor was quite outclassed. Already Hulder had made thirty-five to his eight. The young Russian flung down his cue and, without a word, walked away. In the same minute Olga stood up, and Hulder went up to her with a smile upon his face, as if inviting her to sympathize with him because her brother was behaving like a naughty child. But he drew back in amazement: Olga's mouth had set into a straight line, her black eyebrows into a savage knot; giving him but a single look of ungovernable rage, she turned her back upon him.

IV

As an overladen ship that tumbles groaning from the crest to the trough of waves, the strange friendship progressed. Had these three not been intellectually isolate among the tourists, it would have suffered disaster, so angry and uncertain was the intercourse that built it. Hulder was never easy with the Russians: nothing told him that some chance word would not arouse their rage or, worse still, a crooning fondness translating itself into prayers that he would forgive. The atmosphere was hectic, and his friends were mantled in mystery; shockingly, Fiodor had, on the previous night, seen him come toward him upon the road, then with a high, crackling laugh, cried out "141," and rushed away toward the quarry.

The incomprehensible figure bit into Hulder's imagination. The original "143" was now "141"—and two days had elapsed. He groped for significances, for some object Fiodor aimed at, attainable only with the efflux of time. But he doubted his own capacity to follow into some unguessed cavern the will-o'-the-wisps of Fiodor's thoughts. And now, still anxious, but too well bred to question him, he lay upon the moss in the little wood, at the feet of the young Russian, who sat propped up against a tree trunk.

"How beautiful it is!" he said at last. Indeed, all things were beautiful in

that minute, the tall, slim trunks of the pines, gilded and empurpled with sunshine, the brown-violet bed of needles, the patches of flowered meadows, yellow-green, that rolled up to a distant hill. And the silence, seldom pierced by the call of a bird. His long hands languid upon the moss, his eyes high-raised, Fiodor seemed not to have heard. But he replied, relevantly enough:

"Beauty—the great anodyne! Immortality, absolute, therefore beautiful . . ." His voice sank into a murmur as if he thought aloud. "Yes, true enough, naught save two anodynes to this long disease they call life—philosophy and art: philosophy that transcends life, and art that illumines it. Life might be lived if . . ."

The murmur became a cry; his face was convulsed. "If it were true!" he shouted. "If there were anodynes! Liar! Do you hear, Hulder? Schopenhauer is a liar; there are no anodynes. Listen," he went on, speaking quickly, softly, as a child revealing a secret: "there are no anodynes for life unless you imagine there are anodynes. There is nothing that makes life bearable except the illusion that one enjoys it. It is in our hands to dream as we will, and to dream well is what they call happiness. For there is no happiness, but only dream. What do you dream, Hulder? What is your nightmare?"

"Fiodor Kyrilovitch!" cried the American, frightened, for beads of sweat flecked the young man's brow. But Fiodor did not seem to hear. In a high, angry voice, he spoke to himself.

"Ah, you dare not reply; you're only the underman, little groveling creature tied up by views. You believe in a God, nationality, the drawing room; you know what is right and wrong! Fool, fool, all convictions are prisons! You say you know life is real: that of itself makes it unreal. For, man, you're dying—don't you see, dying as I speak. Can't you sniff the scent of death in every birth? That is the anodyne, the only one, the certainty of death, the only certainty . . ."

He paused, and Hulder could see that his body shook with excitement.

"Fiodor Kyrilovitch," he said gently, laying his hand upon the young man's arm, "do not speak like that. It's absurd. You're too young."

"Young!" cried Fiodor. "I, a second of space, young! Hulder, I'm only a passing mood of the life force, a puff of the great wind. A million years ago I was alive: minus a million years old, that was my age. Oh, we're old, you and I, traveling to here from so far a star, and we're dying on to an unconscious life!"

"To an unconscious life!" repeated Hulder. "Yes, that's true. We shall be, and we shall not know."

"But," screamed Fiodor, with tortured face, "how can you bear it? How can you? To die—to rot, yes, I'll suffer that; but to be blotted out, not to know—I can't."

"Can you not hope?" murmured the American.

Fiodor shook his head.

"Not often. Sometimes, when I know what I am, the little atom which will join with other atoms to make the overman, I am content. Oh, some must die, those who serve and fail, the common men, the servants and the drones; but we, who feel, strive, lust, achieve, we must live, for we are life. We are the essence, we the aristocrats, we are God. And yet, in other minutes, I know that my body must go, that I cannot hope to outlive it. And soon we must face it, you and I."

"Perhaps not soon," said Hulder.

"Ha, ha," laughed Fiodor, "140, ha, ha! What fun! Schopenhauer says it would make us angry to see a day slipping away unless we were assured of eternity. Oh, what rot! What rot! And Nietzsche's secret of a good life being that we should live dangerously! We do, don't we, with death in our train. Argument and precept, falling like arrows shot at a stone wall . . ."

For a moment Hulder was terrified, for Fiodor's incoherence suggested mania, and he shook with merriment as he raved. Suddenly the Russian became serious.

"Do you read Fichte?"

"No."

"*Engländer!*" said Fiodor contemptuously. But his face changed; he listened.

Below them in the wood they heard a call: "Fedia! Fedia!"

"I'm here, Olia!" cried Fiodor, and as he stood up remarked: "She mustn't find me sitting on the ground." He smiled; he had shed his anger and his irony, was suddenly a mischievous child.

Slowly Olga came up the slope. As she threaded through the trees, a short, strong figure in white, a new interest awakened in Hulder. For, her white face sun-gilt and a transient flush upon her cheeks, she came supple as a hamadryad escaping from the prisoning tree. And she smiled. As she drew nearer, hidden, then visible, then half veiled by close-growing trunks, more definite, then elusive, she was a creature of the forest, one of those silent things for whom speaks the sighing night wind. As she held up a thermos flask, Hulder knew that his smile was stupid, his heart a-beating.

"Fedichka," she said, "you forgot. Your milk."

"Oh, no more milk," said Fiodor pettishly. "I hate milk."

"You must drink it," replied Olga soberly, as she unscrewed the cap and poured out the milk that was hot and steaming. "Come." She held up the cup.

"No," said Fiodor obstinately.

"Drink," she murmured. She raised the cup to Fiodor's lips, and an ache of delight went through Hulder: her brother stood upon a little mound; she had to raise her arms, and, in the white blouse, her body was close-molded and the sun made radiant the curves of her deep bosom, while her teeth shone in the full smile of her pale face, pitifully tender, passionately adoring.

"Oh, women . . ." moaned Fiodor. Then, with a humorous smile, he drank.

"Again," she whispered. Obediently he drank once more. He wiped the white froth from his lips and said:

"Tyrant. Like all women. Don't you think so, Hulder?"

"I don't mind a woman's tyranny," said the American; "it is a gentle yoke."

He looked at Olga, thrilling a little at the soft intentness of her eyes.

"A gentle yoke?" said Fiodor more acidly. "No yoke is gentle. Shrouded in velvet, it is still a yoke."

"There I have you, Fiodor Kyrilovitch. If it is velvety you don't know it's a yoke—and it ceases to be a yoke. Your own theory."

Fiodor frowned. What was this strange tightening of Olga's mouth? But he smiled, he laughed, confessed his defeat: whence came the soft curving of Olga's lips?

"True," said Fiodor; "you have scored, Hulder. But that doesn't show you're right. It only shows I'm inconsistent: and none but a fool is always consistent. You know I'm right, at the bottom; only you're an American, therefore a sentimentalist."

Hulder protested, Fiodor interrupting, Olga listening seriously. At last only did Hulder manage to state his view.

"Yes, I know what you think. You think we Americans are so busy making money that when we do see our wives, between office hours, they seem wonderful and we make fools of ourselves over them. We do, sometimes, but there's something else, Fiodor Kyrilovitch: an idea that woman is the representative of nature, the fount of the race, while man is only her defender and her helper."

"One man can keep thirty women in a harem," scoffed Fiodor.

"Yes—and we need only one man, but thirty women. We need women more, and that is why we prize them higher. Even their weakness is a claim."

For a moment, as Hulder found Olga's eyes intent upon him, he felt that a link was forging, that this attitude of mind, new to a Slav, drew her to him. But at once Fiodor burst out laughing.

"Weakness! The twentieth century and talk of woman's weakness! Good God, read a little biology, and you'll find that woman is stronger than man, only her strength has been in abeyance. And now she's trying to come to the top again, to smother us in sentimentality, to suck our blood while we sleep, to enslave us by desire into serving her."

Harems! Yes, that might save us yet—bars and padlocks and armed guards. Oh, not guards against other men, but guards to prevent women from harming us, drugging, deceiving us. Woman should be bought and sold. And when she has played her part as a mother, let her do the field work and all the other work of the world.”

“And we men?”

“No work for us. Work’s for woman; that’s all she’s good for.”

“But,” said Hulder, acid, though Fiodor shook with excitement, “if we do no work we shall decay, and then women will certainly win.”

“No! Let men have the learning, women their ignorance. We can hold them then as we, the aristocrats, hold the fool masses of the people. And let us keep the arms—keep the arms,” he shouted; “ride, hunt, shoot, fight, and fear none.”

Hulder started back, for Fiodor’s face was inflamed, and yet he thought the Russian ridiculous in his rage, in his mouthings so ill-suited to his weakness, his racked body.

“Fedial!” cried Olga fearfully.

“He’s a fool,” growled Fiodor. A sudden change came over Olga’s face.

“How dare you excite him?” cried the girl. Her cheeks became brick red.

Fiodor stamped. “Why don’t you hold your tongue?” he screamed.

“Fiodor! Fiodor!” Olga shouted. Then to Hulder: “You don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Hulder stood amazed as the two turned upon him: Olga heated, hoarse with fury, stigmatizing him for an idiot, a liar; Fiodor tearful and spitting insults. Then, quite suddenly, there was silence. Fiodor drew a hand over his wet forehead.

“What have I said?” he muttered. Then, in a low voice: “I have been rude. Unjust. Oh, I am hateful! Forgive me!”

He flung himself on his knees, seized Hulder’s hand. “Oh, don’t hate me, don’t hate me,” he groaned. “Only a hundred and forty—” The American was for a moment paralyzed, for Fiodor was kissing his hand, and now Olga, too,

had thrown herself at his feet: he felt her hot lips upon his hand.

“Get up, both of you,” he shouted. This was too great a madness. He drew them to their feet. “Get up; of course I forgive you.”

The Russians stood before him, trembling, wet-eyed. Simultaneously they each took one of Hulder’s arms, began to walk with him toward the road. Then Olga said:

“Let me give you a little milk. Oh, do let me give you a little milk.”

“No, thanks,” said Hulder stiffly. Then, understanding her impulse, he added, “I’m not thirsty,” and softly pressed her arm against his body.

“I wish you’d have a little milk,” said Fiodor.

“He won’t,” said Olga sorrowfully. “I’m afraid he won’t.”

V

Too great a madness? No, not yet. For two days, inevitable reaction from an intimacy too rich in incident, Hulder held a little aloof from the Russians, contented himself with nodding as he passed Fiodor, who sat reading in the sun; and he checked his desire to speak to Olga, though the gray eyes signed to him, reproachful and appealing. He struck up acquaintance with the two touristic young men, accompanied them to Starnhofen, where there was a dangerous rock to climb; as he talked with them of the scenery, of the respective merits of Pilsener and Munich beer and answered endless questions as to salaries and conditions in America, he had to own to himself that he was bored, missed the fierce stimulus of Fiodor’s speeches. He was obstinate, however. Bent on giving the Russians a lesson, he went to Munich for the day, there to yawn before the pictures in the museum, to scoff at the cheap impressionism of the Juryfreie show, and to wander, silent and friendless, so long that in the end he reëntered with pleasure the train that took him to Ammenberg. Yes, he was bored; and when, later in the evening, Frau Pettinger became arch, suggested that she knew why a single gentleman

went to Munich, while the honeymoon couple giggled and the young girl in the print dress fixed upon Hulder wide, intelligent eyes, he felt incomprehensibly irritated by the cheapness of these people. He had seen, felt too much in a week to tolerate fools.

And so he was glad when, the next morning, Fiodor drew near, head a little bent and of manner gentle, to ask whether he would come for a sail with him and his sister. It was warm, though a steady breeze blew from the west; opposite the Hotel Schwaben a little crowd wrangled and bargained for the sliders and for the family boats; grandmothers were lowered into the capacious sterns, and from the station platform a long line of tourists passed over the bridge to the pier, where waited the steamer that was to make the round trip through Possenheim and Holling. The sun hung high. As Hulder laid his hand upon a brass fitting of the boat, he exclaimed, for it burned him. And the Russians laughed, all the unease gone. As the boatman, high-seated on the stern, steered the little craft through the traffic, past the baths where the timid were noisily plunging in the shallow water, Hulder felt a great relief. The motion of the sailing boat, as it hugged the wind, smooth and deceptively swift, its veerings, light as those of a bird, as it tacked, under his eyes the flying green water that broke into strings of flashing emeralds at the bows, and the rising shore where clustered Alsterfeld round its modern castle, here indeed were beauty and peace. Olga sat by his side, Fiodor in the bows. They were silent, for soon they had left far behind the busy front of Ammenberg, saw it only as a row of little pink and white splotches; the boatman, seeking wind, had steered for the center of the lake, and about them spread in heavy silence the dark green water that murmured only when some tiny wave broke against the side.

"It is beautiful," said Hulder.

There was a long pause. Then Fiodor murmured:

*"Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme et volupté."*

And again there was silence. Indeed, for three hours, they hardly spoke at all. It was not only that they were watchful of the endless succession of woods growing close to the sedge-lined banks, of tree-crowned rocks and ruins garlanded with ivy; some unity had come to them, a unity based on Fiodor. For Olga's eyes often turned to him, and without a word she would readjust upon his shoulders the falling cape; and Hulder mingled with the blue and green vision of sky and water the picture of her firm, broad neck, her long hands, so white and blushing coral at the tips. Hungrily, he filled of her beauty, and was surprised to find in himself no jealousy, the male jealousy that cannot bear the fondness of woman when given to another. As the lovely lips smiled upon Fiodor he felt no pang, perhaps because, often, the gray eyes turned humid toward him and engaged him in some complicity to protect the brilliant weakling who joined them. "You and I," said the eyes, "we must please him. We must be patient, you and I, you know." It was wonderfully intimate and thrilling to him, absurdly grateful and sacred, so much that it brought its own reaction, that he looked away, tried to wonder what industry fed that factory upon the hill, called himself a sentimental American.

Hulder was not sentimental. He was of that quiet, calm breed that has little use for exuberant emotion. Cool, logical and a little hard, he was preoccupied with his own life, was not very much more than most men the axis of his world, but more consciously so. Clear-eyed, he looked for happiness. He had loved, once and unfortunately, then in a looser spirit, here and there as chance would have it, in American and European cities; but buried deep in him was the conviction that the woman would yet come who would call from him something noble and thus make him noble. He looked at Olga's soft eyes, wondered and was afraid.

But the three shook off their languor and their tension. The lunch at Holling, at a little table under flowering horse chestnut trees, was light and gay.

Fiodor challenged Hulder to a drinking duel and was restrained with difficulty by Olga, who now laughed and even told one of those comic Jew stories that always delight a Russian audience. They ate too much; Hulder confided a little of his early struggles to avoid work in the United States; Fiodor became reminiscent of days at Moscow University and ended by boasting what a great man he was, while Olga indulgently laid upon his friend the soft, slow smile that meant "You and I." And, in the afternoon, in the moist grass of the meadows, they found a few premature white and purple flowerets, the *herbstzeitsrosen*, roses of the autumn time.

But, when again they entered the boat, something in the air had changed. Suddenly the heat had fallen, and Olga anxiously swathed Fiodor's neck in the comforter. The boat scudded before the freshening wind; the boatman was more intent, for the air was fitful; continually they passed through pockets when they made hardly any headway, emerged into zones where, for a moment, the sail flapped wildly as the broken wing of a wounded bird. And, at intervals, struck by a squall, the boat heeled over, lay to the water, the gunwale flush with the hissing lines of shimmering foam. As the twilight darkened, caps of gray cloud formed upon the hills. Olga had come close to her brother, thrown one arm about his shoulders; she was calm, calmer than Hulder, who disliked the strained sound of the rigging, the sudden fierce dip of the sail toward the brilliant little points of the waves, purplish in the sunset. But Fiodor was not calm: his eyes shone; he muttered.

"Black waves," he said, "mirrors of the night before it dawns—"

"Hush, Fedia, hush."

"Why should I? Earth or water, it's all the same. Equally they bury men. Yes," he cried, as if some intoxication seized him, "sooner or later they take us, as they will take me."

Swiftly he tore from Olga's arm. He was on his feet, clinging to the mast, despite the boatman's warning cry.

"Sooner or later!" screamed Fiodor. "What does it matter—137 or less?"

Olga, too, cried out as the boat heeled over, but already Hulder had clutched at the Russian, dragged him down; and now he was holding him in his arms. For a moment a glint of rage had come into Olga's eyes, but she grew soft as she listened. Hulder murmured to Fiodor, gentle, almost crooning.

"Don't be afraid, Fiodor Kyrilovitch; the water will not take you. See, I'm holding you. Feel how warm I am! Could anything harm you now?"

The Russian's eyes lost their wildness. His features relaxed:

"Oh," he whispered, "this is good." Soon he was lying passive in the sheltering arms, his head pillowed on his friend's broad breast.

Swiftly on sped the gray and mauve streamers of twilight, shade eating at the whiteness, and gold upon the hilltops to purple dying. Hulder, the thin form in his arms, conscious only of motion, had forgotten Olga. But, as the lights of Ammenberg twinkled in the night, something was impulsively thrust into his hand; it was another hand. The long, slim fingers closed round his in an intimate clasp that joined the two cold palms. He turned. In the darkness he saw Olga's eyes bathed in a soft radiance.

VI

HULDER knew that he loved. Again, inconceivably, absurdly, because a waiter had told him that he would like Ammenberg, because he had been too aimless to differ, because two Russians, one of them stricken in body, had traveled a thousand miles to a second rate hotel on an obscure hill—preposterous that by chance the woman should come. Was love a sort of roulette? Would his heart have remained empty forever if he had chosen the Hotel Schwaben? Perhaps, unless the love passion be truly blind and the same day (who knows?) other eyes had opened. But, absurd or not, Hulder loved Olga, and all the more because, illogically, love thrives best in an atmosphere of paradox.

He knew that he loved her when she thrust her hand into his, when the thrill of the contact ran up his arm, transmuted the iciness of the clasp into a blood rush all incendiary in quality. He had said nothing, but held the hand, ground it savagely, felt a ring under his fingers and fiercely, cruelly pressed it into the cold flesh. As he looked at Olga he knew that he hated her, wished to destroy her—aye, to offer her up, body and soul, as a burnt offering to his love of her. For the sex conflict was on him, thawing his snows. He had to make war now, to conquer; without this there could be no joyful peace. Olga had not resisted; indeed, she had returned the clasp as if begging him to hurt her, to set his imprint upon her—to connect her in a wild trinity of passion with the boy whom he held fast against his breast.

But it was love, too, this cruelty. Hulder had stood face to face with her at the gates, the lights streaming upon his comeliness, his small head, his short-cropped, curly hair; he seemed to her so steadily blue-eyed, so square-chinned, big and reliant as a rock. For a moment she had wondered whether he could help her. She had wanted to cry out:

"Oh, save him, save him! He is my brother, myself, my love. Dispel his wildness, restore his body, give him strength—and I am yours, your lover, your servant, your squaw, to toy with or beat or kill."

But Olga had held herself in too many years, too much schooled herself into calmness so that Fiodor might be soothed. All that she could do was to look up at Hulder humbly, tell him who they were.

"We are twins," she said. "Our parents are dead, and Fiodor was studying law at Moscow. But—one lung was touched; we went to Crimea where there are vines. It was no good—one lung was destroyed—we traveled everywhere: Davos, the Italian coast, Algiers; everywhere it was too high or too low, or too hot—the sweats of night—oh, my God, oh, my God!" She hid her face in her hands. Then more assured: "So we

came here; the doctors said that this was not too high, but sometimes—"

"Sometimes?" asked Hulder gently, drawing her hands down.

"The other lung, too." Her face was now livid. "Sometimes I think—"

"Oh, Olga!" Hulder, still holding her hands, drew her toward him. She did not resist, for now she talked feverishly. Her self-control gone, she told everything. They were free, they had money, but she feared Fiodor was dying. And worse, he knew. Some doctor, some brute, some fool, in Lucerne she thought, had given way to him, told him he had only six months to live. He counted the days—one by one.

"Ah!" cried Hulder, understanding at last. "That's why he said 137—137 days."

"Let me go!" snarled the girl. As she tore herself out of his grasp Hulder saw the mask of a fury, shrank away.

But, next day, she came soft, as if she had given herself by giving her confidence. Stronger indeed was her faith, for that day again it was the will of the American saved Fiodor from ending his dance of death. It was he thrust away the young man, snatched from his hands the steering wheel of the motor car into which he had beguiled them. All had gone well, but at the top of Starnhofen hill Fiodor had suddenly put on speed, and with a cry of "135" headed straight for the downgrade. While Olga sat limp at the back of the car, she had watched as a prey for which wild beasts fight the struggle for the wheel—heard the quiet, hurried "Let go, Fiodor" of the American, the horrible, steady proclamation of her brother's numbered days. She had sat, hands gripping the sides, while the car miraculously swayed through a curve—felt herself rocking—seen a white wall toward which she seemed to travel swift as a flying spear—and then her brother had been struck in the face before her eyes—she had fainted.

She sat up upon the grass. The two men knelt trembling by her side.

"Pedia!" she cried; drew him down, kissed his cheek. Then her face set.

"You!" she said savagely to Hulder.
 "You struck him! You dared—"

"To save him."

"Oh!" She staggered to her feet.
 "Oh, I am mad! You struck him—I hate you, loathe you. No, you saved him. I owe you his life. Oh, forgive me."

She flung herself at Hulder's feet. He laid a hand upon her shoulder. She shrank away. "How dare you touch me with your murdering hand?"

And again, in constant alternation of feeling, she had come to him. With every mood of her brother she had changed in her attitude to the American, as if some mysterious correspondence of feeling were established between them. It was an uncertain, dangerous companionship, and Hulder wondered why he tolerated it, why he bore with what he now believed to be madness in the young man; though he wondered, he knew; only he would not acknowledge the truth too readily. This mother passion in Olga had stimulated in him something more profound than the ever-fiercer attraction of her; as she stood or walked by his side a desire began to gnaw at him, until he had to knot his hands together for fear he should publicly seize her, bend back the white pillar of her neck and crush under his the pouting, purplish mouth, but he knew that a streak, all mental that one, pierced through and colored the fury of sense. He wanted her love, and the tenderness of her, to have her lightest caress, to have her for sister, companion, friend as well as lover.

For she was as a broad river flowing slowly between low banks. And even when in spite she had her majesty.

Fiodor, humble and for a while conquered, as if he were a woman, as if male strength had daunted him and made him joyous, had walked the road with Hulder, his arm about his neck. Soon Olga had come to them, and the moon had shed upon them a pale green radiance. She had allowed Hulder to take her arm; then, unrebuked, to slide his hand along her forearm, hold her hand, under cover of the night to play, one by one, half purposeful, half sport-

ive, with the long, lax fingers she yielded him. Hulder stood linked to two parallel emotions, as if in the grip of some composite force that acted and reacted through two elements. He was as a cork floating in a bowl of water that communicated with another; if water were poured into the first bowl he rose in the second. And for him there were no local storms. One night, when a discussion of the Slav temperament had involved him, when he had praised Dostoevsky, only to be told that this literary bungler tried to drive a three-horse chariot, but harnessed one of his steeds to the tail, when once more Fiodor was contemptuous and angry, Olga had snatched away her hand.

And yet, next morning, Fiodor had wept in his bed, prayed that his American friend might bring him his breakfast and talk to him. Then Olga had come, half commanding and half entreating. Without challenge she had laid both hands upon the American's arm.

"I can't go on," thought Hulder; "I don't know what I'm doing."

Indeed, he hardly knew how to hold those two. He had not before known love and friendship as hair shirts, nor had he known them to rush as dragons across his path. At school, at college and in later years, friendship had slowly blossomed for him; acquaintance had warmed into something closer; then confidence had been given and reciprocated; dreams and hopes had shyly come out of concealment, and then, sometimes, intimacy had arisen, a community of feeling and desire; but never before, in less than a fortnight, had he found himself forced into a close relation with strangers, a relation emotional on the one side and on the other passionate. Everything that he felt was contrary to American practice and to American tradition, for neither Olga nor Fiodor had eluded him; the young man had revealed himself at once as fierce, almost desperate and certainly hysterical. He had allowed his new friend to guess his *weltschmerz*, and Hulder knew that Fiodor knew that he knew the secret of his malady. Him-

self thoughtful and intuitive, he was capable of grasping something of the tumultuous emotions which racked Fiodor's decaying body and threatened to shake it to pieces as over-powerful machinery slowly loosens the plates of a small ship. He guessed very well the origin of the ferocity with which Fiodor viewed his fellows; it was not surprising that the beauty of sky, flower, woman and beast should arouse in the heart of the young Russian, together with a powerful esthetic delight, an unbearable hatred.

Hulder had not been surprised when, quite suddenly, Fiodor had told him that he hated the world because it would survive him, that he hated lovers because they would still love when he was rotting, that he hated beauty, and joy, and gaiety, because these things were eternal, and that if he believed in any God he would pray to him to let him live so long that about him, as the sun slowly lost its heat and the eternal fire of the earth died, he might see the ice gaining upon the land, the flowers wither, the fog obscure the sun until it was no more than a poor yellowish disc which he might outstare. He wished to see man become again what man had been when he emerged from the ape: a creature without intellect, dominated by nothing save its passions, incapable of feeling love, ambition or hope, capable only of understanding those things that the beasts understand: fear, lust, hunger, and cold, until at last he might see man crouching, naked and hideous, in a stone cave, and his mate no longer scented, playing Puccini, and dressing in Vienna, but now no more than the brute with long hair whom her master might beat or kill. Then, at last, he might, as the cold gripped closer the ball of the earth, assist at the death agony of the last man. And then in the desert, when the earth was dead and no more in space than another moon, he would gladly give up life, for he would have been the last of mankind, the greatest of the aristocrats.

Yes, he understood. For indeed it is not easy to conceive the earth without oneself. None can fill the gap left by

one's disappearance. One does not disappear—one changes; and belief in God and survival is, after all, only a certainty that one carries within oneself a spark of defined essence, which means that one will not merge into the Godhead: no, more arrogantly, man hopes to merge God himself into his own immense and terribly vivid personality. Belief in the future life is blasphemy in disguise. It was not wonderful, thought Hulder, that a dying man, such as Fiodor, should blaspheme: who, more than a dying man, had a right to curse eternal life?

It was not, however, upon Fiodor that most of Hulder's thoughts dwelt. Little by little, as by a tide that slowly rose, obliterating the foreshore, he had been absorbed by Olga's personality. At first mysterious, almost incomprehensible, it had struck him merely as self-centered, expectant and brooding; he had thought that she lacked vitality, merely existed as some beautiful flower of the field. But he had changed his metaphor, begun to realize her more as a spreading tree under which a man could shelter from the sun. He had discovered her as a creature with a single passion, as twin of body to her brother, also twin of soul. All that was in Fiodor she, too, contained: his fierceness, his love of the beautiful, his sweetness, all the intolerable conflict of spirit and sense that made him up. But these currents of her ran under a placid surface: she was potential where her brother was actual. Those furies when Fiodor was displeased with him, they were Fiodor's furies at one remove, and her smiles were smiled by Fiodor through her mouth. On the day when Hulder knew that he loved her he was indeed disturbed by a new sense: if she was Fiodor in woman's form, through her he loved Fiodor or both of them; and he loved them inextricably as if he had conceived a comic, a tragic passion for the Siamese twins. It was ridiculous, and yet it was wonderful, for that day, when for the first time he held Olga's hand, he could hardly divest himself of the feeling that some maleness had crept into the girl's features; he almost expected to see fall-

ing over her left eye an untidy mass of black hair.

Fiodor had wished, that afternoon, to be alone, so they had left him sitting upon a bench on a hillock, reading an unexciting novel of Heyse, his cape wrapped about him and the red and green comforter so closely wound about his neck that all that could be seen of him was a rather pinched yellow nose and two brilliant eyes. He looked, more than ever, like an anxious and excited crow. He had promised to go home as soon as the sun went down, and now together, in the heat of the day, Hulder and Olga walked away, passing the garden of warring clematis, toward the lake. When they reached the banks and saw the water shining dully like molten lead under a haze of heat, Olga clasped her hands together, bent her head. In that moment she was all languor, and Hulder wondered where, when far from her brother, all that energy which she devoted to the maintaining of his life lay dormant. He did not, however, very long watch the play of the wind on her black hair; he was too active in mind to remain thus quiescent.

"Shall we take a boat?" he asked.

"If you like," said Olga.

Slowly he pulled out toward the center of the lake. Olga, half sitting, half lying against the cushions, seemed abandoned and lax as Hulder sculled almost unaware of the rhythmic movement of his body. He wondered what thoughts coursed under that low, white brow, and he was stung into desiring those thoughts should be thoughts of him, for she was very beautiful as she thus lay. The sun, striking beyond the brim of her straw hat, had found gaps between the black strands of hair that fell low upon her forehead, and patterned her features with a queer criss-cross of shadows that threw into relief the dead whiteness of her skin. Eyes closed, eyelashes making a shadow upon the high cheeks, mouth a little open as if in some momentary weakness appealing for strength, long hands, lax and languid as bending sprays of fern. And joined with this weakness, this woman softness of her, was the incongruous woman's

strength of her broad shoulders, of the strong curves of her breast, deep flanks and slim hard-knit limbs under her flimsy skirt. She was beautiful, intolerably: as a woman, fierce bearer of passion, and yet sweet, weak toy, hard-handled by another's pain.

As he pulled, Hulder wanted to tell her that he loved her, for he had not done so yet though he had touched her and though her lips had been upon his hand. He wanted slowly to ship the sculls, to kneel, to throw himself by her side, draw her hands to his cheeks and, his face hidden on her breast, to murmur to her the avowal of his passion. Yet he was so surrounded, so saturated by the atmosphere of the common curse they bore, that when at last they spoke, it was this he said:

"I wonder what Fiodor is doing?"

There was a silence and then, suddenly, Olga said:

"Do not let us talk about Fiodor."

Very slowly the significance of this stirred the American, and, with a beating heart, he slowly turned the bows of the boat toward the shore where, near Alsterfeld, the trees came down to the water to drink. Olga had opened her eyes, and now, gray and immense, they stared into the sky above Hulder's head, stealing from the heavens a little of their purple radiance. They did not speak, either of them, as silently and swiftly Hulder urged the boat toward the shore. Soon they slid within the shelter of the willows that hung about them their tender green curtain, their drooping twigs. The willows stooped, firm-planted in the earth, toward the water, here and there caressing it with twig or leaf, as if tree and water were wedding. Soundlessly, as a swan moving stately upon a pond, the boat passed under the interminable arch that the trees made as they succeeded one another along the line of the shore; slower and slower came the strokes of the sculls, and closer and closer was the air about them as grew the sense of solitude and of the unity of two. Hulder found that his strokes were losing their power, his arms moving more slowly until, by almost imperceptible degrees, the boat stopped before

the wall of giant bulrushes that grew across the water in steep plantation.

Careless of the skulls which floated on the dead water, Hulder slid from his seat. Again his heart was beating and some keen disappointment worked in him because still Olga seemed unaware of him. She seemed so aloof, so remote from him, that his uncertain purpose again wavered, that he felt tempted so to remain in the cool shadow of the branches, to fill his eyes with all this beauty about him, and with that to be content. The beating of his heart accorded ill with the languor that was upon him, a languor that with every second seemed to gain upon him, to press down his limbs with soft, velvety but leaden hands. He wished that this state might last forever, wondered a little whether it had always been. And yet there was anxiety in him.

Suddenly Olga looked up, fixed her eyes upon his. She did not speak or smile, but there was a softness in her look which Hulder did not analyze because he did not mistake it. Almost unconsciously he bent forward, slowly slid from his seat toward the girl and then, without intent, he was by her side, outstretched, and he had taken Olga's hand, drawn her arm round his neck. His head resting against her, he softly drew her hand to his cheek and then, very softly, pressed his lips into the warm palm. Olga did not resist, nor was there in the contact of her hand any sign that she felt or desired the caress. Her eyes were closed now, and for a very long time those two stayed, very close and linked, conscious of their nearness to each other, and yet perhaps of something unsaid, that must by and by be said, that would more truly link them. As they reclined, side by side, Hulder knew himself invaded by a content he had never before known, as if this girl were by her quiescence, by the calm protectiveness of her, giving him that rest and security which he had never found in the common turbulence of passion. He was conscious less of her than of the fact of her, as he might be conscious of the purple vault which he could glimpse through the branches of

the trees. With her arm about him, inactive but strong, he was as a child at its mother's breast.

They had lost the sense of time, and time fled. It was Olga first knew that something of the oppressiveness of the heat had gone, guessed that upon the dull waters the shadows were lengthening.

"We must go," she murmured.

Hulder, still in his dream, did not reply. Suddenly, a closer sense of life filled him, for Olga's fingers had acquired some new and purposeful energy. He felt them move upon his cheek, softly caressing. They dwelt about the strong hard line of his shaven chin; with smooth, firm tips they pressed into his cheek. And, at last, it was the whole of Olga's hand that had drawn his head closer to her, so close that almost against his ear he could feel the steady beating of her heart. Within him an activity seemed to quicken. Seizing her hand, he turned and very close looked into eyes that met his, grave and tender. His mouth moved, he wanted to speak and could not, for too much was rushing out of his most intimate being, too great was his desire to tell her he wanted her, needed her, was her master and her slave, would be her conquest and her conqueror.

He held her in his arms and, though they did not speak, they knew, both of them, that they needed little more besides this etheric communication. Even his hunger for her lips had vanished in Hulder's dumb, passionate desire for self-expression. He wanted her now more than her lips. Olga understood. Without pushing him away, she sat up in her seat, still looking into his eyes, then very gravely:

"We must go."

Without a word Hulder released her, and as he did so she gave him a long, slow smile, a smile more confident and linking, because a smile accomplice, than would have been a caress.

Again began the rhythmic swing of the skulls. Full-stretched upon the cushions as the sun went down, Olga was bathed in the dying brightness of its gold.

But once they reached land and the

charm was broken by a brief quarter of an hour under the little red and white umbrellas of the floating tea place, Olga was no longer merry, no longer insisted upon feeding with cake the numerous dogs which went begging about the tables. She changed. Something urgent began to pervade her manner, as if the life that an hour before had been so remote, when she lay under the willows, had seized her again and was again beginning to dominate her. She was anxious.

"We must hurry," she said. "We have been away too long. I wonder what Fedia has been doing? Perhaps"—and a note of fear was in her voice—"perhaps he has not gone back to the hotel when the sun went down."

She started up and Hulder had to pull her down to her seat.

"Oh," she cried, "he's so imprudent. We must go. We must go."

And all along the road she was silent and hurried. Hulder had to stretch to their utmost his long limbs to keep pace with her swift, nervous paces; upon the flat she ran heedless of his protests and assurances that doubtless all was well with her brother. And she was breathless when, at length, she leapt up the steps of the Kaiserhof, ran up the stairs. Hulder followed, and laughed aloud as Fiodor met them upon the first landing, book in hand, quite calm, smiling, wearing not only the cape but even the comforter. But he was charmed as he saw the change upon Olga's face. Hardness and anxiety had gone. She blushed faintly in her delight as if, in her mother soul, day had dawned.

"Come upstairs into my room," said Fiodor. "There's an hour before dinner. I have talked to nobody today, and that's bad for me, isn't it, Olichka?"

"You talk too much," said Olga, with mock severity. "That's why you talk such nonsense."

"Nonsense or not," said Fiodor good-humoredly, "I must talk. I'll let any doctor have my life," he added grimly, "but not my tongue. Come along, Hulder."

The American followed him into his room, and at once Fiodor began to talk

as if indeed three hours of silence had been more than his restless spirit could tolerate.

"Do you know," he said excitedly, "last night I had a dream! A terrible, a wonderful dream! Listen." He whispered, very quickly: "I wanted to tell you this morning and then changed my mind. Listen: three elephants came slowly, one behind the other, and each had a wreath of peonies upon his head, and behind were more elephants, and yet more elephants. I couldn't see them, and I knew they were there—and upon the first elephant rode the figure of Death, upon the second elephant an angel with your face, upon the third elephant was Frau Pettinger." He laughed. "Wasn't it funny—because, among all the elephants I couldn't see, I knew there were baby elephants."

"Frau Pettinger's baby elephants," said Hulder, laughing.

"Perhaps," said Fiodor seriously, as if he had not meant his "Wasn't it funny?"

"Listen; it isn't finished. The three elephants began to trumpet all together, and I could understand. They were calling to the invisible elephants behind, and this is what they were calling: 'Elephants, old elephants, young elephants, where are you, elephants?' And then, from very far away, came a faint trumpeting: 'We are dead, and we are unborn. It is all the same.' Then an organ grinder began to grind and the elephants began to dance, and I heard Frau Pettinger say: 'Hurry, Maria, with the coffee.' But it wasn't Frau Pettinger calling; it was another elephant, a very little white one, and, as soon as the word 'coffee' was done, that one, too, began to trumpet and to cry out: 'Where are you, elephants, old elephants, young elephants?'"

"And then, very far away, came the low trumpeting as they answered: 'We are in the Kaiserhof eating sausage.' But I knew it wasn't true—and yet I believed it—because I seemed to know that there was nothing true . . . What are you laughing at?"

Hulder had thrown himself back in his chair, and was laughing aloud. It

was not only that the dream struck him as absurd; he, too, had had these curious dreams where the material mingled with the fantastic, but Fiodor's tragic seriousness struck him as irresistibly funny.

"What is there to laugh at?" Nazimov repeated. "It isn't funny; it's significant."

"Are you going to read your future from dreams, Fedia?" said Hulder.

"My future?" said Nazimov contemptuously. "Of course not. The future needs no reading; the future is death. Dreams tell us something, don't you know?"

"Yes, they tell us something about indigestion."

"Tush," cried Fiodor. "How can you talk like that? You don't dream when you are awake, even if you have got indigestion. It's your other self speaking, your foreconscious self."

"Foreconscious?" said Hulder, puzzled.

"Yes, the foreconscious self in the subliminal plane. Don't you understand? Have you never heard of Freud—of psycho-analysis—of Jung of Zurich?"

Hulder looked at him, blankly, but Fiodor had forgotten him and was expounding at length the Freud method. He was so excited, he spoke so fast, that Hulder could gather only roughly that dreams released a self, of which we were not conscious, located between our conscious self and our unconscious self. That was the foreconscious self. If we could analyze it by the method of free association between patient and operator, by questions evoking responses, we could discover early mental lesions, old, painful impressions upon the brain, to which were due our phobias, blind fears of trifles and our inhibitions, those incapacities to do or to bear.

"Yes," Fiodor cried excitedly, "the dream is the key. Thus, when we lie defenseless in the arms of night, our secret hidden soul comes forth, all seared and torn by life. Oh, I'm glad I dreamt—I so seldom dream. That dream shall be read." His excitement grew. "I'll go to Freud; he shall read me. He shall make me see the things

I fear." His smile became beatific. "And I shall fear no more."

"Why not?" asked Hulder.

Fiodor looked at him with gleaming eyes. "Why not? You say, 'Why not?' But then," he cried gleefully, "you understand? You believe?"

"Oh, well," said Hulder. "Why not try?"

Fiodor's expression became sour. "Oh," he said, "empiricism, that's all." Then, after a pause: "*Engländer.*"

Hulder laughed. He was amused when Fiodor, looking for the most stinging insult he could think of, called him an Englishman. But Fiodor did not mind. Even half-agreement was enough to satisfy him. Already he smiled again.

"Oh, yes, you've your doubts, and no wonder. One always has one's doubts before one knows; but you're not afraid, are you? You're American; you like the new. Oh, you are a wonderful people, accepting, open-eyed, the good and the bad." His excitement grew. "And you, Hulder, you're wonderful, so calm, so resolute, and you always know what I mean, though I know it's difficult. It's my fault; I am difficult. Perhaps I'm mad sometimes, and there you are, always ready, always indulgent. You know what I mean. You do, you do," he cried. "You're the only one who has ever known."

"I tried," said Hulder.

Fiodor seized his hand. "Yes, I know." Then, very seriously: "I did not think there could be elective affinities between men, but there is one between you and me, is there not?"

"Yes," said Hulder gravely, and, as he spoke, thought of Olga.

"Elective affinity," Nazimov repeated. "Hulder, we have a common ego, you and I." His grasp tightened. "Will you be my blood-brother?"

"Of course I will, Fedia," said Hulder.

Nazimov gave a little cry of delight, and at once Hulder found himself a party in an extraordinary scene. Nazimov took a glass from the washstand, filled it with water. Then, open-

ing a penknife and pushing up to the elbow the sleeve of his velvet coat, he dug the blade into his thin arm: there was a little spurt of blood which he caught in the glass of water. Then, mutely, he held out the knife to the American. Hulder hesitated. Unconsciously he recoiled. He had heard vaguely the details of this barbarous rite, and was willing enough to subject himself to it, but the knife, all bloody, was a dreadful object. Under Fiodor's burning eyes he drew his scarfpin, gingerly grazed his wrist, and pressed out a few drops of blood into the glass.

A cry almost escaped him, for Fiodor had gulped down one half of the contents and now, with a rigid, maniacal expression upon his face, was holding out the remainder to him. Evidently he was to drink his share. At that moment a thrill of horror ran right through the American's body, for the mixture, he knew, was all animate with bacteria. To humor Fiodor, yes; to contract consumption, no; and yet he shrank from offending the young man in whom, with every second of hesitation, fury seemed to grow. But the fear was too great.

"No," he said briefly. "That is not the custom of my country. Our blood has mixed; we are blood-brothers; but I will not drink."

There was no reply, but, with a swift movement, Fiodor threw the blood-tinged water into his face, half blinding him and, in the same second, as Hulder closed with him, he heard a crash against the wall which showed that Fiodor had also thrown the glass at his head. For some seconds they wrestled silently, for Hulder had no breath to spare in restraining a strength that was all mania, while from Fiodor came only a series of low animal growls. Quite suddenly he collapsed, and Hulder threw him down on his back upon the bed. For some time Fiodor remained quiescent in his grasp, but still glowering, his spirit untamed in his weak body; then little by little his features returned to normal. The look in his eyes became soft. When at last Hulder released him his face was twisted in agony. He slid to his knees,

seized the American's hands. "Forgive me," he muttered. "I'm a dog. I'm uncivilized, a barbarian. Oh, yes, yes," he cried, as Hulder tried to speak, for he was now anxious to abase himself, "I am a Hun, I am not a Westerner at all. I am a savage. You are the people of the West, the people furthest from the beasts. Oh, forgive me, forgive me."

His voice broke and there were tears in it. The sobs grew, rose up from his throat, tearing, choking little sobs which, as they increased in intensity, blended into a horrible, continuous moan.

Hulder stood paralyzed in his grasp, unable to think of anything to do or say. And, at that moment, the door opened; Olga came in. She did not look at Hulder. As if impelled by some automatic device, she ran to the kneeling figure, seized it by both shoulders, lifted it on to the bed and at once, as she bent over Fiodor, her voice was soft and crooning. She begged him to tell her what had happened, what had been done to him, and many times she pressed kisses upon his tear-stained cheeks. She rocked him in her arms until, little by little, Fiodor's moans became less loud, until at last they ceased, and he remained pale and exhausted, his head upon her breast.

In that silence Hulder spoke. "I'm very sorry," he said.

Olga looked up at him with an air of surprise as if just aware of his presence.

"Sorry!" she repeated, and her eyes lit up as if she realized his connection with Fiodor's state. "What have you been doing to him?" she snarled. "What have you said? You've insulted him! How dare you insult him? Go away, go away; I don't want to see you. Go away," she cried, louder, and the soles of her feet began to tap as if she, too, were near the hysterical line.

After a second's hesitation Hulder thought it best to obey. His knees seemed to fail him when he went, so intense and racking had been the little incident, and so wounded was he by its sequel.

The evening dragged out. Hulder thought he would leave Ammenberg, abandon these madmen, find some place

where there would be peace. But he did not know where to go. Perhaps he did not want to go. And he remembered Olga's eyes, the glow in them when she was angry, almost as wonderful as their humid tenderness when she melted to him. He would go, but could not.

At eleven o'clock that night, when he was sitting on his balcony and about to go to bed, he heard in the stillness, coming through the open window, a conversation in Russian, in excited tones. He did not understand, but when at last, quite suddenly, there came pealing through the night the same set of three words, maniacally screamed, he knew what was happening: it was Fiodor calling in despair the dwindling account of the days he had to live.

VII

FIODOR fell in love. He had been alone down into the town to buy cigarettes. At the shop where he usually bought them there were that day none of the brand which he affected. Still muffled in his cape, with the comforter hanging loosely about his neck, he walked quickly through the narrow streets. The sun was streaming upon him; he was warmed and gay. He stopped before a little shop where, behind a large show of porcelain pipes, of picture postcards and photograph frames, were stacked packets of cigarettes. Across the showcase was painted in large letters the name of the owner, Treitzen. He went in. The jangling little bell brought to the counter a girl. Smiling, she bent toward him, but Fiodor did not speak. With burning, hungry eyes he analyzed every detail of her, the plaited flaxen hair, the soft blue eyes, the perfect pink and white of her cheeks and neck, and the wonder of her little teeth set in very red, rather full lips that smiled at him humbly and yet very tenderly, as if capable of expressing only the gentleness of love, almost motherly. She bent a little further forward.

"Was wünscht der Herr?"

Fiodor did not reply, for her movement had brought out in her arms and

breast gracious curves which promised the woman a beauty greater than was given the girl. Staring at her, he yearned for her, felt as if some call were issuing from his body toward hers. She was still smiling as, hoarsely, he said:

"What is your name?"

"Elsa, mein Herr," she replied, and was as calm as if his question were the ordinary preliminary to a purchase.

"Elsa," he repeated. *"It's a beautiful name, and you are beautiful."*

The girl blushed; from her forehead to the edge of her low-necked blouse she was as a rose petal.

"You are beautiful," Fiodor repeated.

Then, leaning a little forward, his eyes fixed upon hers, which quite frankly met his, as if too innocent to be afraid, he said: *"I love you."*

Elsa looked away: *"Aber—mein Herr!"* she murmured. She was confused but not displeased.

The sun had brought out some color in Fiodor's pale cheeks; his black hair was ordered that day and, though slight of figure, he, too, was beautiful.

"I love you," Fiodor repeated, and without any hesitation he slid his hands forward, took those of the girl, who but faintly resisted him, bent across the counter, drew her toward him so that her half-averted face rested against his cheek, and kissed her upon the lips.

VIII

FIODOR was gay; Fiodor was exuberant. His conquering tread spurned the dust upon the white road and, as he walked, he sang light little mazurkas, scraps of operas, and even two or three bars of the old Russian ballad: *"Over the river, the soft, flowing river, bends the weeping willow."*

Upon the steps of the Kaiserhof stood Hulder, rigid, prepared to be offended still, but Fiodor had forgotten: what was sympathy or blood brotherhood to a lover? He seized the American's hands.

"Oh, Hulder," he cried, *"I'm so happy, I'm so happy. Isn't everything wonderful? See, there's a hawk in the sky."* He pointed to a tiny speck hover-

ing high above. "The hawk, he'll get his quarry soon, and I—oh, Hulder, I want to dance." He ground the American's hands in a hard clasp and then bounded up the steps of the hotel, was gone.

"Another change," thought Hulder. "Still, a welcome one." Indeed, it was a welcome change, for an hour later, when he arrived for lunch a little late, at the small table which he shared with the Nazimovs, he found a new Olga waiting for him; no longer the mouth-ing, fierce Olga of the previous night, but one who greeted him with a smile soft as velvet.

Fiodor did not hide his secret. There seemed no reason why he should, and if there had been he could not have resisted sharing with them his intolerable delight. Each one in turn was told the details of the adventure and other details as they came. He hid nothing, neither the impulse that had come upon him nor the way in which he had succumbed to it. It seemed to him natural that he should respond so swiftly to the call made to him by the girl, that he should recognize without any of the little shamming and coquetries which make up human intercourse the fact that, as he looked into Elsa's eyes, a new shaping had come to his destiny.

"Isn't it just a little—sudden?" suggested Hulder.

"Sudden!" cried Fiodor. "Of course it's sudden. Isn't a thunderclap sudden? Doesn't a mushroom come up in a night? And does the crocus hesitate when it thrusts up through the soil its little white and purple sheath?"

"True enough," said Hulder. "But then you forget: the storm has piled up for a long time, while the crocus and the mushroom grow very long under the soil."

Fiodor looked at him contemptuously. "And do you really think," he said, "that love doesn't pile up and grow? Why, love amasses in every one of us for days and weeks and years. Amasses and concentrates until, almost at bursting point, it rushes forth into the open like the devil, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

"Indeed!" said Hulder, still sceptical.

"Then your love is impersonal? It burst forth and Elsa happened to be there, and you're going to eat her? Good heavens, Fiodor, one hour's delay and it might have been Mrs. Pettinger your devouring lion encountered. What an escape for both of you!"

Fiodor shrugged his shoulders. "*Engländer!*" he said. But he was too happy to remain offended. Newly a lover, he had to persuade all men that he was a lover. More than that, he wished all men to be lovers, so that his passion might thrive in an atmosphere where all worshiped as he.

"Hulder," he said gravely, "you're only pretending not to understand. You, too, you know it. The great adventures of life are like dragons that wait in hiding by the side of the road; they rush out upon you suddenly, stand across your path and bid you fight. There's no time for delay then, and you know when your time has come." He bent upon the American eyes that seemed curiously lucid. "You, too," he repeated, "you know."

And Hulder was silent, for at that moment Olga's eyes had suddenly met his and, with a shock, he had realized that this was true: he, too, almost as soon as Fiodor, he had known. And he wondered whether Fiodor also knew his secret, or whether the egotism of the invalid was so great that he was unaware of anything that passed outside his immediate mental circle.

All that day Fiodor talked to him, wildly, without end, to Olga almost as continually, but with the note of caution which a son would adopt toward his mother, of Elsa and Elsa's charms. "She is like the peach, the peony, and the white of the lily chases upon her cheek the jealous color of the rose; her hair is like a ripple on the lake when the sun gilds it; her mouth is like a bow carved in the flesh of a pomegranate . . . and shy and tender is she as a fleeting doe—as a fleeting doe anxious to be slain. And, bending, she is like a reed in the embrace of the wind . . ."

His melancholy lifted. He was intoxicated with the new wine poured into the old bottle of his life.

"She is everything I've been waiting for, the sweetness, the softness and the calm. And she is the love hunger and the sting of love. She did not resist me, for why should she? Was I not the one for whom she had waited her eighteen years, and those thousands of years during which she was in the making? I adore her; I'm drunk of her."

Indeed, he was drunk of her and, as Hulder considered him, his gray eyes darker in their wildness and his black hair matted over his left eyebrow, his little mustache trembling with the intensity of his feeling, he felt anxious, afraid of this new passion so strong in its uprush, and so daunting. It was as if Feodor, cold in the shadow of death, had suddenly been reanimated by the promise of life, and yet, knowing this promise to be false or transient, had sworn to draw from life all he could while he could, to gather while he might the roses of lips, and all this was so wild, so strange, because the gravedigger hung so close behind the ringer of the wedding bells.

Hulder went to Olga, spoke a few of his fears.

"He is very excited," he said, when Fiodor had disappeared, evidently to walk up and down before Treitzen's windows to catch a glimpse of Elsa.

"Are you surprised?" asked Olga.

"No, of course not. But still, whatever he says, it seems so extraordinary."

"Yes," said Olga gravely. "He always is extraordinary—it's amazing, you see—she's not even a girl of his own class."

"I don't say that matters much, but still—"

"But still," said Olga, with a rather ironic smile, "but still it does matter, and yet you don't really think it matters."

"No," said Hulder. "After all, it doesn't matter. Love, like God, has no respect of persons."

For a moment, as their eyes plunged into one another, they achieved unity, and there trembled upon Hulda's lips the avowal of his own passion, for he, too, was inflamed by this atmosphere which Fiodor was creating, anxious to

follow his example, but the disquiet in him was too great to allow him to express himself just then. He had another preoccupation, that of Fiodor himself, because the rigidity of an almost New England conscience made him feel responsible for what was happening.

"There is something else," he said, "that troubles me. His—his state of health."

"Well?" said Olga, rather harshly.

"I don't want to exaggerate, but still—you know what I mean."

"I don't, or rather I do. And what has that got to do with it?"

"Surely," said Hulder, "you must see what I mean." The girl doesn't know—how ill he is." He looked sideways at Olga, rather anxiously, fearing an outburst, but apparently the girl was taking the discussion as if it affected a general question.

"No," she said, "of course the girl doesn't know, and she mustn't."

"Mustn't?" cried Hulder. "But really it isn't quite fair."

"Fair?" said Olga vaguely, the idea of fairness evidently a little foreign to her. "I'm not talking of that. But don't you think it splendid that Fiodor should be so happy?"

"But the girl, the girl!" cried Hulder.

"Well, what of the girl?" asked Olga, quite placid. "I'm talking of Fedia."

Hulder was silent for a moment, realizing that Olga saw no side save that of Fiodor. But still he had to make another effort.

"I see what you mean," he said. "But he can't—marry her!"

"Marry her?" said Olga, surprised. "Of course he can't marry her, but why should he?"

"He—he—" faltered Hulder. "If he can't marry her, then surely it can't go on."

"Why not?"

"It'll make her so unhappy if she doesn't know; if she's in love with him—which I can hardly believe—she'll break her heart when she finds out."

"That's quite possible," said Olga coldly. But a glowing warmth came into her voice. "Don't you think it

splendid that Fiodor should be so happy?"

Hulder surrendered. He knew that he had made no impression at all upon Olga's point of view, which was soft as the tenderest flesh where she loved, steel hard toward the rest of the world. Though he had failed, he felt closer drawn toward her. A tigress, perhaps, but had she not lain very close in his arms? And would it not be wonderfully warm and heartening if it were he, the object of that passion so capable of concentrating itself upon one creature to the exclusion of all others? And yet his conscience bade him intervene between this fresh young girl and the consumptive, perhaps the madman, who threatened the safety of her body and soul.

Very shyly, that night, he spoke to Fiodor, only to be met by a mixture of blank incomprehension, as in Olga, and of rhapsodies on the perfections of the new love. He dared not, for fear of a scene and the crying of a fateful number of days, speak quite plainly. It would not have mattered much if he had, for Fiodor, intoxicated with his new delight, had forgotten death, glimpsed immortality. One little thing, though, Hulder did: remembering the scene in the boat, not many days old, he suggested to Fiodor that he had better not take the girl upon the lake, for he had a terrifying vision of Fiodor, suddenly overwhelmed by the fear of impending death, deciding to forestall its blow, and to go to it in the arms of his beloved. Artfully, he suggested to Nazimov that he was liable to catch cold upon the lake. He rallied him, told him Elsa would have no use for him if he blew his nose all the time. But Fiodor laughed and replied:

"I'll catch no cold now, Hulder. I couldn't: *La fortune favorise les amants*. Nothing can touch me."

As he spoke there was such a glow of youth and health in his face that, for a moment, Hulder wondered whether indeed this were new life, whether Elsa's love could perform a miracle denied to the doctors. And then, realizing himself as helpless, he felt that events must

take their course. Elsa must take risks, and if she took them with closed instead of with open eyes, that could not be helped, for another sharp scene with Olga had followed upon his attempt to induce Fiodor to avoid the lake.

Olga had suspected in him a desire to step in between Fiodor and his happiness. She had come to him with that close knot in her eyebrows which Hulder knew and feared.

"How dare you interfere?" she asked. "What has it to do with you?"

Hulder once more stated his case.

"Don't be ridiculous," said Olga. "That day in the boat he was nervous, upset. It was nothing, just an accident."

"It might happen again," said Hulder gravely.

"It will not happen again; he's too happy."

"Yes," said Hulder, "he is happy." And there was a little longing in his voice. Olga's next words were less harsh, but still firm.

"You must not deny Fiodor pleasure," she said. "Both of us, we must do what we can."

And Hulder felt a little shame because so many of his scruples vanished when this woman, whom he feared and loved, said "both of us." It was ignominious, he knew, that he should be a party to such an adventure; allow such things to be done as might be done because he himself was held captive by a passion. In that minute he knew that he would have sacrificed Elsa and every other woman in the world, if only Olga had once laid upon his cheek her slim, white fingers. A party to a conspiracy, to a conspiracy, perhaps, to destroy a young life. Yes, he was that; inactive yet, but consenting, because he had inextricably wound in the thread of his life among those two other threads that at all moments became one thread until, in his bewilderment, he was part of some hideous, thrilling trinity.

A consenting party—then an active one, for Fiodor, prosecuting his suit and animate of love, still suffered enough from his physical weakness to need a helper as well as a confidant. Soon it

was Hulder walked down the steep hill into the village to buy sweets which Fiodor gave to Elsa, and it was Hulder went into the shop and bought cigarettes, so that Fiodor might not too much be noticed of old Treitzen as he sat in the back room, peacefully smoking his long porcelain pipe. It was Hulder who whispered to Elsa the hour of the assignation which Fiodor made for the day in the fields on the road to Starnhofen. All through he was conscious of something abominable in his role. When he thought more coolly of it he saw himself as a separate figure: a tall, good-looking young man, in modish gray flannels, leaning across the counter and talking to a young girl with fair hair and rosy cheeks, who was herself another ghost. For the figure was not he, it could not be he, this assistant to an insane romance, who could look unmoved upon blushes that went as flying, rosy clouds across a milk white skin, and be so cold and so base as not to cry out while he might: "Take care! You are in deadly peril. Draw back while you may."

And he hated himself more as the days went and he knew that he was happy in his abjection, for the happiness of Fiodor created in Olga a state of mind by which the accomplice benefited. Very near now were the fruits of his complaisance. More than ever he longed for them, and every day, because he longed for them more, he hated himself more. Through his love of the Russian girl Hulder found running a streak of hatred and fear, as if she held him by some vile magic. But though he rebelled against the spell he knew that he was glad.

He was glad even in Fiodor's happiness because a little he had a hand in it. Every day now Fiodor went to the fields on the road to Starnhofen. Treitzen kept no close watch upon his daughter and so, every day in the afternoon, under the golden shower of the rays of the sun, she went quickly, a slim figure with eyes averted and a little guilty because she had a secret, to join her lover under the shadow of a big fir tree, where the rivulet that meandered toward the lake was spanned by a white bridge. There she

would sit upon the short grass that the heat had charred brown, her fingers busy with some knitting, while every minute her eyes would rove, glad and a little furtive, to see whether Fiodor were coming. And every day he came, quick stepping, his cape thrown across his shoulder, his black mustache combed at a gallant angle, with his hair flying in the wind, and about his thin frame the jauntiness of a musketeer. He would throw himself upon the grass by her side, draw her hands to his face, and talk to her wildly, endlessly, of life and love, and all the things that made beauty. She spoke but little, for she did not always understand. But, as she looked deep into the fierce eyes that devoured her, she was glad. For all this whirl of words, this periphrase, these allusions to writers and philosophers unknown to her, bore toward her the same message; it did not matter to Elsa what Fiodor said: his words, set together, were her song of songs. And when, at last, suddenly pausing in his harangue, Fiodor would seize her by both arms, draw her down and kiss her lips as if he would destroy her in a caress, she was all gladness, conscious only of a desire to be all his because she loved him and had forgotten the world.

And so, gaily on. Fiodor spoke no more of anodynes for life; he needed no longer philosophy and art; for he had found love, the anodyne which contains all others. Once he even proclaimed that optimism alone made life vital. He had forgotten Schopenhauer; almost he had forgotten all those other philosophers who had so ill reconciled him with his speeding fate. Suddenly he seemed to love all things. He called the dogs upon the road to caress them; he played gentle games with Frau Pettinger's children; he allowed the old official to tell him what Bismarck would have done to the Social Democrats. As his life opened as a flower, a new life seemed to come into Olga. She, too, now, could be all gaiety. She had abandoned the armor of fierce reserve with which she had protected herself against a hateful world. She, too, now, hated none, despised none and, as if Hulder, because

he was the accomplice, were the engineer of her brother's happiness, she bent toward him as if already she were his. And Hulder, slowly drifting, came at last to the point where he and Olga were to meet. It was night. Fiodor, content and babbling, had been put to bed early and, as a child overexcited at a party, had gone to sleep as soon as his cheek touched the pillow.

Alone, Olga and the American went out into the moonlight, passed the hotel, the villas and their lighted windows, into the wood where they could not see each other but were conscious only of their nearness. Then into a clearing where was a bench which the crescent moon silvered. As they sat down Hulder was thrilled with memory, for he knew that upon this bench a hundred lovers had carved their interlaced initials. For a long time they did not speak, but looked into the black void of the little valley above which the crests of the hills glowed in the moonlight. Round them the silence was complete, for the cattle had been called home and stirred not in their byres. They had a sense of the everlasting, and Olga, perhaps, would not have moved; but there was in Hulder something male and restless: silently he took her hand. She did not resist. Half unconsciously he laid his arm about her shoulders, drew her to him in one wild, intoxicating moment, knew that she had not drawn away, indeed that she had come closer, laid her shoulder against his. Then, still more wonderful, that her head had fallen upon his breast and that his lips were buried in the thick, scented masses of her hair.

He spoke, hardly knew what he said, knew only that he was trying to express his longing for her; the interminable length of a waiting which had lasted so little and yet been so heavy, so torn and racked had he been by all it had held. Olga did not reply, save by a contented little sound as he drew her yet closer to him, and his strained lips, descending from her hair, found her closed eyes. For some seconds they sat, close-linked, thrilled and yet languid, together.

Olga opened her eyes, looked deep into his.

"I love you," murmured Hulder. "Do you love me?"

Olga did not reply but, with a sudden movement, flung an arm about his neck, drew his head still closer, and swiftly, violently kissed him upon the lips, filling all his body with the shiver that ran through hers, taking, in her caress, possession of him, together giving and taking.

Still linked, but less closely, they spoke.

"I'll follow you to the end of the world," said Hulder.

"Yes," whispered Olga, "follow me, follow him, follow us, love us!"

"I am yours," he said.

"And I am yours."

"Will you marry me?"

"As you wish. In free grace or in marriage, I am yours."

The words shocked him and yet thrilled him. Free or bound, she was his. Incredibly, it was true. All doubts, base, incongruous, swept away, and the moon veiled the while by the night of her hair. He bent down and felt as if he were falling, interminably falling into a depth as his eyes came nearer to her open eyes and conquering, conquered, he pressed his kisses upon her lips.

IX

DAYS of love unwinding as a feverish scroll; love, fleeting in the high airs, borne on the rosy wings of the flamingo; passion soaring on the pinions of the eagle and below, in these abysses above which none save birds can dwell, four pale servants of Zarathustra, four souls intimately linked to each other, bound by impalpable and tangled threads, joyous in conflict, suffering in unity, together welded as four fighting beasts.

It seemed to Hulder sometimes as if the weakest of the four were the keystone of that arch upon which their relations were built. Though secure in Olga's love, and though now, for him, she was all sweetness, he was conscious that, were it not for Elsa, Olga would not have been his. That she loved him, he knew. Not only had she said so but,

bolder than more Western women, abler, too, perhaps, to look deep into herself, she had told him what it was made her love him.

"I like your bigness, and your strength," she had said. "And all that short-cut, fair, curly hair. Your calmness, too. What would you say if, suddenly, the Wetterspitze were to fall into the lake?"

"I don't think I should say anything," said Hulder.

"There!" Olga laughed and clapped her hands. "That's exactly what I thought you'd do."

"One day there is the Wetterspitze, and the next day it is gone. What else is there to say about it?"

"Oh, you are wonderful, wonderful, you American people. Sometimes I think you are finer even than the English: quite as strong and not so stupid."

"You don't think we lack emotion?" asked Hulder.

"No, of course not," cried Olga, "but you're not like us; you don't let it run about the gutter. You are there, with your reserves and all the strengths that you might use." Her tone became appealing. "And you will use them, these strengths, won't you—for me and Fiodor? Oh, we need you so badly, both of us, and you love Fiodor. You do, don't you?"

"Yes," said Hulder, drawing her close.

And as he did so a strange feeling came to him. She needed him, needed his strength, his calm, his resourcefulness, needed them for herself and for Fiodor. Of course she was welcome and he, too, poor creature, racked by passion and the fear of death. But, undefinably, he felt disappointed because it almost seemed as if he were not alone with Olga, as if, when together they sat in the sun, the tenuous shade of another fell across and distorted the outline of their own shadows. But he was weak and he knew it, for in this minute, when he held Olga in his arms, held her close, and was all shaken with the powerful thrill of her nearness, he forgot. Between them was no shadow now, no shadow he could perceive, and yet, even as he kissed her lips, this shadow that

he could not see was indefinably about them in the form he held, in the fragrance of Olga's breath.

And now it was not only one shadow but two shadows: a phantom couple in attitude recalling his own with Olga. He loved, was loved, and Fiodor loved, was loved. Together almost the loves had come about, as if twins. And Olga and Fiodor were twins, were one. An indestructible connection seemed to exist between them all, as if he had given himself to Olga who brooded over Fiodor who intolerably loved Elsa: it was a preposterous, laughable House That Jack Built, the wild race of the torch, the flame passing from hand to hand. But then again, when such thoughts took him, pressed him against the uneasy bosom of his intellect, he thrust them away. It was not elixir that Olga poured, but narcotic.

And still the days of love went by on wings rosy as those of the flamingo. Fiodor, in pursuit of his love, had not expressed what he wanted of her: whether passion without thought or ruth, or marriage and bourgeois comfort, or unconsciously, perhaps, a remedy for unoccupied days, or perhaps even just a lie, something to make him believe that his mind was not disordered, that he truly saw the rosy wings and not the grizzly, black webs of the bat. His depression had not returned. It was not a dream he lived for; he was too active, too vital. Giving his life into the custody of another, he had taken another's life into his own charge. It seemed as if he had for the first time come into the fullness of his activity. Dead were broodings and philosophies, uncertainties, vain rages and regrets. Illumined by the high-flaming star of his passion, he rode with the Valkyr. It needed all Hulder's tolerance to make him understand that the pink and white daughter of a tradesman could be the cause of such a revolution. He had to remind himself often that the idea was more than fact, that the object of love is far less than love itself. But soon, in the growing egoism of his own love, which made it impossible for him to trouble about aught else, he ceased to

question the end and the genuineness of Fiodor's passion. As if Elsa had indeed been the highborn creature, rich in thought and emotion, who should have been Fiodor's mate, he accepted her.

Once only did he descend from the pinnacle of egoism on which every true lover dwells. Accidentally, upon the shore of the lake, opposite that spot which serves as a wharf for the little sailing boats, he met Elsa. For some moments he was able to consider her unobserved. She was clad in a skirt of thin white material, over which was a plaid blouse, low-cut at the neck. Rather round-faced, her head bent a little under the heavy weight of her fair tresses, she looked intently toward the lake. All of her, the slenderness not yet redeemed by maturity, the round curves of her white neck and bare arms, all this was so young that Hulder felt moving in him something tender and sorrowful. She was as a little bark setting out upon the ocean in fair weather, and ignorant of the storms to come. He went up to her, spoke. She hardly answered, so great was her embarrassment, and so great her desire to suppress her blushes, to appear very sedate, collected and grown-up. Timidly, she inquired whether Fiodor was well.

"Oh, he's quite well," said Hulder, a little guilty. Then hurriedly: "He's always well now."

She could not govern her blushes.

"Yes," said Hulder, "he's a new man since he loves you."

Elsa averted her head.

"Why do you turn your head away? Don't you love him, too?"

She did not reply, and he saw her fingers tremble.

"Don't you?" he said, impelled by an extraordinary desire to gain the truth from her, while aware that the truth mattered little: if she loved Fiodor, she went to disaster with him; if she did not love him, another disaster must come.

"Yes," she whispered.

Hulder spoke of Fiodor, of his charm, of his wild cleverness. He painted him as a weak thing animated by a fierce spirit, and Elsa listened gravely for a

very long time, while Hulder spoke of his friend, and of Olga, warmly, excitedly, as if something of the ambient hysteria had touched even him. All this that was happening was not common life, but some nightmare. He had with words to drug himself into a belief in its reality. Elsa listened to the end. She made as if to speak, turned away. Then her soft features became resolute; she looked him full in the face.

"Oh, Herr Hulder!" she cried.

There was a pause and then, suddenly, there burst from her the dithyramb of her adoration. Looking beyond Hulder, she poured forth her love song. All that she had dreamt had come—the little blue flower of German sentiment—the learning, the philosophical bent that a German woman reveres without understanding it—and above all the youth, heart and body aflame, Lohengrin in his silver armor drawn by the swan . . .

It was pitiful, wonderful. And, out of the tenderness of this love, Hulder drew something very gentle which he laid later on Olga's altar, there to be scorched by the fierce flame of her passion. And that evening, as if a plot had been hatched by earth and sky, there was a thunderstorm.

While the glittering peaks of the mountains were still bathed with rose, a mauveness crept up from the valleys toward the slopes. Purple fought with red, dominated it, and in its train came gray, long streamers of cloud rising from the south slowly moving into position, capping every peak with a gray haze which slowly grew darker until, upon a background yellow as sulphur, the clouds had set as troops about to go into action. Sulphur paled into whiteness, darkened into gray and as, under the weight of heat and clotted water a hush fell over the country, the clouds seemed to join up into one common blackness, blotting out the sky. And then, very slowly, the greater blackness of the mountains began to merge with the heavens, for a thick, gray shroud of rain, many miles away, was uniting air and rock.

For nearly an hour, dull against the rattle of the forked lightning as it zigzagged like streams of molten metal across the black wing of the night, came the continuous, muffled roar of the thunderclaps joining up in a terrible chorus. Sometimes the sky was naught save a sheet of flame in which the black mountains, lit up by the bolts that struck them, appeared like lacework cut in basalt.

The three stood at Hulder's window, against which the rain swept, sometimes sharp with hail, sometimes so heavy that it might itself have been a shower of stones, and then quite solid as another pane of glass. Before them the trees struggled in the wind, bending to earth, their branches furred about them as a woman's skirts about her limbs. And once, before their eyes, flew something large and black: the roof of a shanty torn from its walls.

An intolerable excitement seized them. Standing together, Olga and Hulder clasped each other's hands, unconscious almost of Fiodor, though they had not told him their love, as if they had realized that to tell him would not have affected him, that there was room in him for only one thought. Fiodor, close against the window, stared out into the black and golden fury of the storm. He murmured to himself. His mouth worked and, little by little, he became audible.

"Storm," he said. "Revenge of heaven upon earth, fouled by man—you are like a vulture settling upon Prometheus and tearing at his liver. Strike! Yes, strike again, oh, Storm! Strike while you may, for we fear you not, we men, we strong things of the world. For we have wit and learning, and we have love." A flash of lightning gilded his face, gave brilliance to his eyes. "Love," he cried, "ultimate, self-sufficient, self-explanatory, accountable to none! See! There goes Love flying by upon a golden chariot, drawn by black clouds harnessed with lightning!"

He was wild, he was mad. And those two who stood with him, silent, with their souls boiling within them, were they, too, wild and mad? Were all mad,

or were all men so? Could, in three weeks, three creatures lose contact with the little laws and the little habits of civilization, stand stark before a storm as if spirits thereof, because in the grasp of their passions they were tossed by a greater storm?

"Are we all mad?" thought Hulder. And, swiftly, out of some deep cavern of himself, that he had not explored, came the reply:

"I don't know, and I don't care."

Fiodor had stretched his arms toward the fire-streaked night; behind him Hulder drew Olga close in a hard clasp.

X

FIODOR lay at Elsa's feet. About him, the afternoon was in mid-glory. A soft, effulgent warmth rose up from the distant waters of the lake that were unruffled as a silver mirror. He lay full-length on the charred grass, stretched out upon the cape, a little languid in the heat that had made him throw open his coat. At times, with a nervous hand, he pushed away from his forehead the matted, black hair that clung to his skin. But the movement was unconscious, as was also his observation of the scene: his head thrown back, he looked at Elsa, at the firm whiteness of her chin and the queer shortening of her features when so seen. Elsa did not look at him, save from time to time, almost by accident, when for a moment her blue eyes would plunge deep into those of Fiodor, soft, humid and conveying, without coquetry or concealment, the gentleness of a soul surviving the turbulence of its passion. More often she let them satiate themselves with all this landscape which she had known for eighteen years and for the first time saw as beautiful. She was revisiting the land of her birth with eyes opened and made new. Before her spread the flat meadows, dotted here and there by browsing sheep; beyond were yet more meadows, then little clumps of trees, hazel and birch; quite alone upon a hillock was a great copper beech that now blazed with every leaf as metal, save here and there

where the purple darkness of autumn touched it.

They were alone. Far away was a small house, white up to the ground floor, then yellow and crowned with a roof of crimson tiles. And there was no sound save the distant lowing of a cow and the soft, steady breath of the wind among the light leaves of the birches.

She was oppressed, as if all this newly understood beauty were a gift too great for one who had just discovered happiness. She had never heard of abstract beauty, this little German girl. Those eighteen years of hers had been spent in Treitzen's shop, at school, in the kitchen, and, more rarely, at the fair. She knew nothing, understood nothing. And now, for the first time, as Columbus setting foot on an unknown shore, she was feeling with incomprehensible intensity; her mind was in turmoil with delight. A shy delight, almost incredulous, mixed with a fear of this thing to come which she so desired; she was as a nymph fleeing from a satyr, anxious that he should overtake her, shuddering lest he might. For a moment she let rest upon her lover's face a gaze so purely adoring, so much the gaze which came into her eyes when she knelt before the Virgin, that he noticed it, became conscious of her as a woman and not as an extension of his own personality.

"What are you thinking of?" he asked, taking her hand.

"I don't know," she said, after a long pause, "except that somehow it seems to be too wonderful to be true."

He pressed the hand, laid a kiss in the firm, warm palm.

"It is wonderful," he said. "But it's true. Out of nothing and out of nowhere, little Elsa, I have come because I had to find you, and because you were looking for me. Isn't that true, little Margaret of the golden plaits?"

"Yes," she said seriously, "that's true. I have been waiting. I didn't know it until you said so, and now I know. It seemed so long, so long, *mein Fiodor*."

"Yes, life that is so short can seem very long. It depends what you do with it, you see. Whether you make of it a great adventure that heaps fuel upon the

flame and causes it to devour you more quickly, or whether you let life consume you very, very slowly. Which is the best, little Elsa, do you think?"

She looked at him, uncomprehending but still adoring.

"Whichever way you like," she said.

He laughed, sat up, threw his arm about her, drew her close.

"Ah!" he cried, with the soft, low break that comes into a lover's voice when he holds his beloved. "Whichever way I will! That's well spoken, little Elsa."

And for a long time, slowly, softly, as if anxious to forego no delights, he covered her face with kisses, surrounding with a necklace of caresses her firm, white neck, stinging into redness her rosy cheeks, into purple her consenting lips.

"I love you," he murmured. "I have never loved anybody before, not like this. So it must be true if it's different, mustn't it, little Elsa?"

"Yes," she murmured.

"I love you," he said. "We must never be parted, must we? You will follow me, will you not—to the end?"

"To the end," repeated Elsa, her eyes closed, understanding him not at all and yet content to love him without understanding.

For a moment, though he held her close, he forgot her.

"It is strange," he said, "this quality of love, bound up in such little things: the curve of a lip, the tilt of an eyelash, the note in a voice, or just one stray, gentle word falling like dew on a parched field, and no more. Just one thing so slight and a world born anew. That one thing missing, and the world as sour as it was. What is it? What can it be? It isn't the body only, for one can love when one's body is failing, when one is old, when one is parted by the sea, or even by the grave. No, it is more than the body, though the body be the link. Let us know it and not take the messenger for the message. Love is the discovering of the complement, the solution of the equation, the x which makes it come right. It is a concordance of discords, the thing that makes attraction

complete, just as a kiss, sweet Elsa, completes."

He laughed, bent over her, his lips very close to hers.

"Qu'est ce qu'un baiser? Un point rose sur l'i du verbe aimer."

He kissed her, and for a very long time they were silent.

"And so, my angel," said Fiodor, "all things are said. I love you. Do you love me?"

"Yes," said Elsa simply.

"Are you ready to dare all things, suffer all things?"

She hesitated. Something puritanic or virginal rebelled in her at the last minute. She did not know whether he meant to marry her or not and, desperately, she clung to all that she had been taught; but his gray eyes laid upon her a heavy spell: what he would, she felt, that she would do.

"Yes," she said, gripping his hand tight. "Anything you choose, Fiodor."

He clasped her to him in pure joy, but at that moment there passed through him a new impulse strangely compounded of two impulses. Now he would tell her what she must bear. Despite Nietzsche, and Machiavelli, and all those others who had made him, he thought it fair that she should know that the instincts of a gentleman survived in him philosophical culture. He could do the handsome thing even though the ridiculous. And, mixed with this old moral feeling, there was something else: a desire to test his power, to set himself up as plague-stricken, bearer of a plague, and yet to give to his own pride the balm of a victory. That she should love him, that was well; but that she should love him dying and dangerous, that was better.

He leant over her hungrily and wished that already she knew that in every one of his kisses might lurk her own death: terrible to her, they would be sweeter to him.

"Listen," he said; "I have something to tell you."

His tone had suddenly grown so grave that she started away from him. His eyes fixed upon hers, he did not try to draw her back. Indeed, he loosed her

hands, so anxious was he to offer to his pride of conquest the greatest salve; to be able to tell himself that, without the spell of contact, he had been able to hold her.

"It's something you must know," he said, "know and accept if you love me. I am young and, to you, I seem strong, perhaps fair. But as a fruit that hangs, all gold and crimson upon a branch, and bears within its breast a canker, so am I. Do you understand?"

She shook her head. She could not understand, but she could be afraid.

"I am sick," he said. "I am dying. 'Oh,' he cried, as she leapt to her feet with convulsed face, 'so are you, so are we all. But I die perhaps a little more quickly. I may perhaps live long. A little time ago I thought it would not be long. I counted days. The days—let me count them again. One hundred and eighty-three, less two months and two days, sixty-two—no, July has thirty-one—sixty-three; that leaves me a hundred and twenty days. A hundred and twenty days, Elsa! If that were true, would it be enough for you?"

Hands clenched upon her breast, which rose and fell with her quick breathing, she did not reply, but stared into his face, a wildness in her pupils.

"A hundred and twenty," he said again. "It's a great deal, little Elsa, even if it's true. And it isn't true. It isn't true," he cried more fiercely. "It was true, perhaps until I loved you. But now all things are changed, and I must live even though I have but one lung."

"One lung!" said Elsa hoarsely. "But then—but then—"

In her fear she was almost hostile.

Fiodor's tone changed. "But then," he said, "well, you know—consumption. Yes, that's what it is; I'm consumptive. One lung has gone and the other is touched." He seemed to see her no more. "Touched, even the other, and every day the obscure travail of the tubercles continues, eating me and gnawing me, drinking my blood, sapping my breath. I'm all poisoned with it, and steeped in it. My body's on the rack." His voice rose. "And even though I

love you, even though a minute ago I thought that your love could do what the doctors failed to do, now I know it more truly. Nothing can come between us. A hundred and twenty," he muttered. And then louder: "A hundred and twenty!" He looked at her. "Will you take me for a hundred and twenty days, Elsa? Bear with my humors, watch over me, love me?"

Her hands came out open toward him, but he had not seen them when he added:

"And will you take your risk, Elsa? Will you take poison with every one of my kisses? Will you dance with me the dance of death? Be mine here on earth, and take poison from my mouth, soon to earth come with me?"

"Fiodor!" cried the girl. And there was such a horror in her features that a horrible sting touched Fiodor's pride.

"Ah!" he said. "You're afraid; then you're afraid. So that's the value of your love for me! You love me young and strong, don't you, Elsa—but not weak! And you love me in your safety. You won't come with me into the Valley of the Shadow. Oh," he added bitterly, "it's natural enough."

"Fiodor, I don't mean—"

"No, but what do you mean? You're afraid you may catch it, you, too. Oh, it isn't wonderful. But where's the dream? You're casting me off."

"Oh, no. Oh, no, Fiodor."

"No? You're not casting me off? Then come, Elsa, take me in your arms now. Come, now you know, kiss me, be my bride. Ah, you shrink, you shrink! You're not for me, after all. You fear for the roses and the lilies of your cheek. You don't want with me to pant for breath; you don't want to be shaken by a cough and see the blood pour from your lips. You don't love me."

Suddenly Elsa hid her face in her hands and she began to weep. For some moments Fiodor watched her. She was all shaken with sobs that were deep, almost noiseless, and soon, between her fingers, he could see the moisture of her tears. As he looked a new gentleness and understanding pity

came to him. Was it not too much to ask of this fair young creature that, even in the cause of love, she should give herself into the hands of death? Very gently he took her hands, tried to draw them away from her face. But as he did so a little shiver went through the girl. She drew back. At that moment Fiodor loosed her.

"Ah," he cried, "you shrink, you shrink from me! I mustn't touch you; you're afraid of me, of the plague bearer. Never mind, never mind," he shouted. "A hundred and twenty! What does it matter? It won't be long. A hundred and twenty!" he screamed. And, as he turned and began to run, he cried: "A hundred and twenty—or less!"

Elsa, through her wet eyes, saw him run across the meadows. As he turned when he leapt a stile once more to cry out at her the terrible figure, she saw his face, purplish, convulsed, for the last time. She saw him take his handkerchief from his pocket and, as he vanished behind the trees, she saw that, as he stumbled on, he pressed it against his mouth. For a long time she stood alone. The cold of death had come into her hands and feet; her clothing, moist with heat, seemed suddenly to have grown icy and clammy as a winding sheet. Her ideas ceased to connect.

Fiodor had gone—but he loved her, of course he loved her—and she, too—but he was ill, very ill—and she was afraid. Yes, but what did that matter? Her mind would not hold the problem. She struggled to understand, though conscious now only of irreparable loss. Suddenly the cold of her body seemed more acute and she knew only of one thing, that Fiodor had gone, that she had lost him.

She gave a low cry, pressed both hands against her cheeks, took a few steps forward, a few more, quicker; then she began to run, aimlessly, as if she did not know where she went; to run with hair loose upon her shoulders, her mouth open in a scream which her strained breath would not let her utter, to run half demented across the meadows.

XI

THE denser woods spread over a little hillock between the ravines all tangled with brushwood and creepers that were spattered here and there by scarlet and purple berries. Here a couple sat, silent, under a tall pine tree. Along the base of the hill wound the road toward Starnhofen, like a broad white ribbon shining dustily in the evening sun. Through the boughs they could see the sky slit up by the trunks into blue panels, all of them vertical and almost geometrically similar, as if Nature with an artistic hand had conceived her landscape as a decorator. And there was no sound save, on the left, the distant ringing of the bells of the church with the swollen spire.

They had, both of them, a sense of suspension, as if for a moment the earth had stopped to breathe, interrupting the swiftness of its race about the sun. About them was the silence of the pinewoods, seldom broken by the call of a bird, where there are no leaves to eddy upon the light wind and then to fall, with a dry, crackling sound upon the corpses of their brothers. As Hulder lay at Olga's feet, his head pillowed upon her knee, he had again something of the sensation he had experienced that first time in the boat under the ogives of the willows: content, fulfillment, peace. And yet there now mixed with his beatitude something more precise, a security in his new possession, an assurance that, however tempestuous might run the course of his passion, however much as the fleeing hare it might double in its tracks, surely and irremediably it was such that at last he must reach his goal. Under his contentment lay purposefulness. This hand, which he held, with the slim, hard fingers, it was no longer something distant, something ideal almost: it was an actual thing given into his trust, and he did not doubt that he could hold it, for the hand just then did not refuse itself. Indeed, the long fingers had, little by little, wound themselves in among his own, so that in an intimate clasp the two

hot, moist palms were joined. The lovers did not move, conscious that the clasp of their hands was so close that, holding, they were almost wedded, for hands can be formal and rapid in their touch, and mincing, or sportive, or cold, revengeful, challenging. But when, very closely, they are welded into one, when phalanges are intertwined so that they cannot easily be parted, when palms touch as lips, then are truly two spirits through their bodies embracing.

But at last Hulder looked up to meet the softness of Olga's eyes. She smiled. Her full, pouting mouth parted upon her small teeth; her eyes were half dreamy, half ironic, and it was in a tone where tenderness ran in harness with banter that she said:

"What are you thinking of?"

"You," said Hulder promptly.

She laughed. "Oh, what a ready lover, and what a ready speech! Is that not the answer to give a woman always?"

Still her tone was ironic, but she had laid her hand upon his forehead and softly caressed his hair.

"Your hair," she murmured, "I like it. It's so short, and it tries so hard to curl, and you won't let it. You're cruel to your hair, don't you think—cutting so close those tight little curls!"

"You wouldn't like me to look like a barber's block?" said Hulder.

He, too, spoke lightly, but he was all filled with the delight of this contact, and as he spoke slowly moved his head so that her hand should come upon his neck where his hair grew close like a brush of sturdy little wires.

"You feel like a doormat," said Olga. And still, as if captured by the vigor, the hardness of the man, she continued stroking his hair, forcing it out of its natural lie, glad to feel it rebel against her hand and ultimately prevail. Hulder turned a little to look full into her face, and in that moment was oppressed by her beauty as he never had been before, for the sunshine, as it filtered through the pine needles, had gained a mauve quality that made her white cheeks radiant. And something more contented him: her restfulness and her

power and the response which he felt in the hand that caressed him.

"I love you," he murmured.

Her eyes, still serious, plunged into his.

"I love you. I adore you. Oh, it isn't only that you're beautiful—there's that, of course, though I suppose I've seen many other beautiful women. It's something else. Just you, I suppose."

"Yes, it's always just oneself when one loves. How could one explain?"

"Olga, couldn't you explain?" said Hulder, a little anxiously, as he sat up, throwing his arm about her waist. "Couldn't you?" he asked, with entreaty in his voice. "You can, better than I, you know."

Very close to him, she looked into his face. He could see little details of her, varying color in her pupils, the fine close grain of her skin, and the faint dark down upon her upper lip.

"Explain," she said vaguely, and her brows puckered as if she were seeking words. "No, I suppose I can't. How can one? Just a consciousness of your presence in a world which was different before; only like that."

Hulder was moved for a moment to discuss love and self-expression, but the rhythmic rise and fall of her body against his seemed to deprive him of coherence. He did not want to argue—he wanted to know; and, in his desire, he was willing to skip all intervening steps, explanations, qualifications, possibilities. All that he wanted was to know that she loved him, to be sure of it, and then to be told it as a tribute, and again to be told it as a mere delight, and again to be told it, and again, because the love song is to men's ears the music that is to God's the music of the spheres.

"Do you love me?" he asked urgently.

She did not reply. He held her closer.

"Do you love me?" he repeated.

"Say you love me."

Her eyes were very close to his; he saw her lips move but, before he could catch the whisper, she had come closer, laid her mouth upon his, and the discontent that was in him, that balked desire to know, to hear, all this was

swamped in the close, powerful clinging of her lips as she held him, and, as the shiver of her frame communicated itself to his, his intelligence was swamped by his emotion. To know, to understand, what did all that matter, with this shining, fragrant creature in his arms?

They had broken their link now and sat side by side, still silent, watching in the meadow below the shadow of an elm that slowly grew longer. Then Olga spoke, irrelevantly:

"How still it is. There's nobody here."

"No, nobody," said Hulder. And, as he spoke, far away upon the white ribbon of the road, he saw a figure, no more than a dark dot. Idly he watched it for a time, telling himself that it mattered little who it was, for the road passed below the hillock toward Ammenberg; nobody that walked that way could see them if they did not so wish, and yet he watched that figure growing before his eyes with an interest that seemed abnormal when taken in a stranger. It was as if some instinct bade him keep his eyes fixed upon it, or as if he were moved by some peculiarity of it. Already, when he could see that it was a woman, two things struck him. One that her course was not direct, that she zigzagged across the road. He wondered whether she was drunk, and then remembered that he was in Germany, where those things did not happen. The other was that the woman grew in size at a rate incompatible with walking speed. He realized that she was running, running upon the road very fast, and also from side to side, as if driven by something terrible and imperious which almost deprived her of control of her movements. Then, in the light, he saw shining a strand of fair hair and, quite suddenly, before he recognized her, his heart began to beat as if a suspicion of something secret but sinister were upon him. In that second he knew that this was Elsa running toward them—and she was alone. Could it be—

He heard a hoarse exclamation. Olga, too, had seen, recognized, understood.

"Look!" she cried. "Who's that? Elsa! I'm sure it is—but why is she

alone? Running, see how she runs! But—but—she went with Fiodor!”

Olga leapt to her feet, seemingly unconscious of the grip which the American still maintained upon her hand. Looking away toward Elsa, who was now some two hundred yards away, she seemed rigid, was, with one arm outstretched, as a statue depicted in the midst of an arrested movement; but, suddenly, her features leapt into activity.

“Look!” she cried. “Look at her face! She sways—and her hair is upon her shoulders. Something has happened; something’s happened to Fiodor!”

She tore her hand from Hulder’s grasp and then, with a heart like a balloon tugging at its ropes, he was running behind her down the steep toward the road. As they reached it Elsa came abreast of them.

The girl did not seem to see them. Her blue eyes were staring from her face, now covered with sweat and dust; her mouth was open and twisted as if she could hardly draw a breath, and both her hands were pressed upon her breast; she was still running swiftly, one of her shoes loose and clattering on the road. She would have passed them, so intent was the gaze she bent upon the unknown goal toward which she ran, toward which she would run until her limbs gave way beneath her, or something material stopped her.

Olga thrust out her hand, seized the girl by the wrist so roughly that, carried away by her own momentum, Elsa swung almost round her, fell against her. But, before Elsa could clasp the body that was friendly because it was human, because so badly she needed something to touch and to hold, Olga had thrust her away with a furious push, was screaming at her questions: Where was Fiodor? What had she done with him?

Elsa did not reply. She stood, her eyes staring, unable to speak, and swinging from foot to foot as if she would fall. Hulder caught her in his arms, into which she fell, quite limply. She was half fainting; her head fell back upon his shoulder and suddenly she became quite heavy in his arms. He drew her to the

side of the road, seated her upon the grass, her back against a heap of stones and then, for some minutes, Hulder tended her, wiping her face, softly patting her hands. Crouching over them, her hands upon her knees, Olga again and again repeated her questions.

It was several minutes before Elsa could speak, for there was no brook or pond from which water could be taken to revive her, and even then, when her body had regained energy, there was still in her mind something wild and strained, some inability to understand that which she knew. At last only, in reply to Olga, did she say:

“Fiodor—I don’t know.”

“But you were with him,” cried Olga. “Where is he? You were with him.”

“Yes,” said Elsa. “I was with him.”

“But where is he?” Olga stamped as she spoke, and her teeth set in her lower lip.

“He ran away,” said Elsa, in a low voice.

“Ran away? What do you mean? Why did he run away? Where to? Where is he?”

“I don’t know where he is,” said Elsa, and her head fell back upon Hulder’s breast as if she would faint. But, quite suddenly, relief came. Two large tears formed in the corners of her eyes, slowly rolled down her cheeks; then more tears, coming one after the other, flooding, as if she could not control them, as if her eyes were dissolving into tears. Olga stood silent and rigid before her, realizing that nothing could be done just then, while Hulder very softly rocked the girl in his arms, murmured comforting little words and, from time to time, wiped away the tears until at last they became less violent, until Elsa opened her eyes and showed by the clearness of her gaze that once more her thoughts were sequent.

“Fiodor—” she murmured. “Oh—I remember now. He ran away there across the meadows—he ran away, but I don’t quite know—but he told me that he loved me, and he said”—her face contracted—“oh, dreadful things—that he was consumptive—that he was going to die in a hundred and twenty days—”

"Hush!" said Hulder, for a low cry had escaped Olga.

"It was dreadful—it was dreadful!" murmured Elsa. "He asked me to love him like that for a hundred and twenty days—"

"And you refused," muttered Olga, bending down.

"I was so frightened, I was so frightened," whispered Elsa, as if she had not heard. "He said, I, too, I, too, perhaps would die if I loved him. And he knew it. He said I was frightened; that's why he ran away." She flung both arms about Hulder's neck, hid her face upon his breast. "Oh, I'm afraid," she cried. "Hold me close. He ran away—his eyes were staring and his hair had fallen on his face."

"Back at once!" Olga shouted. She seized Elsa by the wrist, dragged her to her feet, and now she was urging the two along the road. "At once, at once. We must find him. Where did he go? Speak, fool. Didn't you see?"

Elsa shook her head as she stumbled on. "I don't remember; I was afraid."

"Afraid?" said Olga bitterly. "Afraid of the king of men! Little fool! Can't you even tell whether he went to the right or left?"

Elsa shook her head and again began to weep.

"Let her alone, Olga," said Hulder; "she can't tell you anything. We must go back to the hotel and wait."

"Wait!" shouted Olga, and raised into the air a clenched fist. "Wait? It'll make me mad to wait."

They were walking swiftly upon the road now, and the first villas of Ammenberg were passed. Still supporting Elsa, Hulder held Olga's arm above the elbow as if to restrain her. She did not seem to notice it, but walked on, swinging her other arm, muttering under her breath. As Hulder walked on between these two distraught women, he, too, was haunted by some vision of Fiodor fleeing in his despair, disappointed in his love, hopeless of a doomed life, and ending it already in the lake. He did not know what this meant to him, but as he felt in his own the quivering of Olga's arm, he knew that all this was

not without influence upon his fate. And now, as they turned past the Wagenhof, affronting the curious eyes of the people of the town who knew Elsa well, he was hatefully conscious that he had a share in a public scene. Mixed in with his anxiety for his friend, with the pain that filled the woman he loved, with his pity for the poor weeping child whom he led, was the self-effacing gentleman's hatred of a conspicuous position; and, as he realized this, he hated himself, called himself a bloodless, vain creature, unfit for the stress of life. Yet he was, with Elsa, pushed rather than led to Treitzen's shop. He sped with Olga up the road toward the Kaiserhof. Once again, as on that day when they had been too long upon the lake, Olga walked swiftly, tried to run, but this time a greater fear was behind them, touched them with the spur, for it was precise now, not indefinite. They did not speak nor touch each other as they went. There was nothing they could say, for the anxiety which held them was too gnawing to need expression. They were, both of them, wildly rolling in the same area of disturbance, as two ships together sucked into the maelstrom; they needed no words.

Together they ran up the steps of the Kaiserhof, through the empty garden. Together, on the stairs, in hoarse voices, they called Fiodor's name, then ran into the bedrooms. There was no reply. Fiodor had not come back. For two hours Hulder had to struggle against something in Olga which he thought to be growing madness. A little of that madness was in him, too, for when he tried to reassure her, to make her believe that after an hour in the fields Fiodor would return needing her, he found that he himself did not believe this, that he had vague visions of something horrible that had just happened, which were not less terrible because they were vague. All that could be done was done. Hulder went downstairs to telephone the police office, and sent out on a search, to which he attached a reward, several laborers from a neighboring farm. He returned to find Olga, face down upon the bed,

silent, rigid, and when he took her in his arms she still so remained, eyes closed and mouth compressed. He caressed her cheeks, and she did not resist; softly kissed her as a mother comforting her child. Again he was optimistic against the growing certainty of disaster. He told her what he had done.

"A search," she murmured vaguely. "Yes, that's good. I must go. I must search, too."

Hulder restrained her by force. "No, no, you can't go."

"Let me go," she cried, struggling with him. But the American held her.

"No, you can't go. If he comes back here he will need you. You must wait."

"Yes," said Olga quietly. "He'll need me; I must wait."

And so they remained together silent for another hour, until the sun, dipping low, stained the sky blood red. The room was half in darkness. There was a tapping at the door.

"*Herein!*" cried Hulder. A maid, open-mouthed, white-faced, handed Olga an open telegram addressed "Kaiserhof." For a moment she held it out at arm's length before her eyes. There was not a twitch in her features, nor did she say a word, but her face had set into a mask, dirty yellow in color, from which her lips protruded dark brown. In that second of silence Hulder knew that Fiodor was dead and, in his horror, he, too, felt his features setting, grow rigid and so hard that, had he wanted to, he could not have spoken. Almost unconsciously he stood up, went to Olga's side, took the hand that held the telegram. She did not seem to know that he was touching her, but still remained staring at the telegram upon which Hulder, without conscious intention, read the words:

Young foreigner found shot lamp depot Munich Hauptbahnhof. Envelope in pocket name Nazimov. Proprietor communicate police and identify body.

When the silence had lasted so long that from it spectral voices seemed to come and engage him in converse, Hulder, recovering from the horror of the shock, was all swamped with pity.

Gently he tried to draw Olga into his arms, and found it was an effort to bend back her arm. Literally she seemed turned to stone, but still she gave way without looking at him, let him take her into his arms, seat her upon the bed, kiss her upon the cheek.

"Olga," he murmured. "My poor, sweet Olga. This is terrible, but you must be brave; my darling, have courage." And then, with the egotism of a lover, that egotism which convinces him who loves that he is all-sufficient in the world, he added: "I am here with you."

Olga did not reply. Still she remained staring straight in front of her, as if her eyes could still see the words written on the telegram which she had unconsciously crushed in her hand. And Hulder, while he wondered what he could do or what he could say, feeling that the comfort he could give availed little against such despair, seemed to see again unrolling before him the immense tragedy of a few weeks. This was the twenty-fourth. It was on the first day of August that he had met Fiodor. In twenty-three days he had known love and friendship; Olga and Fiodor had loved; Fiodor had died. Truly their lives had sped more swiftly than the globe which bore them.

But now Olga's silence frightened him; she was quite motionless in his arms and, when he bent down to kiss her lips, which were dry and burning, she did not respond to the caress; she seemed unaware of it.

"What are you going to do, Olga?" asked Hulder.

There was no reply.

"Would you like me to go to Munich and—and do what needs to be done?"

Still no reply.

"Or," he said, with hesitation, "would you like to go to Fiodor?"

Olga's eyelashes fluttered. She looked at him as if her brother's name had touched in her some chord that at once responded.

"Fiodor," she said. Then, with queer, quick childishness: "Fiodor. Oh, well, he's at Munich. I must go to him. I must go to him now." She smiled. "I'm going to see Fiodor. How nice!"

She freed herself, rose to her feet. "Where is my powder puff?" She laughed. "How things get lost in hotels! And my handkerchief—I have lost my handkerchief."

"Olga!" cried the American, and did not know there could be such fear in his voice.

She paid no attention to him, took up her hat from the bed and put it on:

"Such an ugly hat," she said. "Look how knocked about it is, and Fiodor hates me when I'm untidy." And then, stridently, in continuous peals, she began to laugh, hands upon her hips, rocking to and fro as if swayed by uncontrollable merriment, to laugh on a shrill, high note.

The laughter seemed to pierce Hulder's eardrums, and in that minute he was almost sure that she had lost her reason. Dominating his fear, he seized her by the shoulders and, in his excitement, shook her until her head rocked backward and forward.

"Olga!" he shouted. "Don't you understand? Fiodor is dead."

As if she had been struck between the eyes, the laughter stopped.

"Dead," she said softly. "Oh, yes, I must go to him."

She had not shed a tear, and now she seemed quite reasonable, so reasonable that Hulder thought it best to offer no comfort.

"Shall I come with you?" he said.

"Come with me?" she repeated, as if some hotel guest were offering her a polite attention. "Oh, don't trouble; why should you come?"

"But I—I—" murmured Hulder.

"You?" said Olga. "Who are you?"

For a moment Hulder was silent, and a thin streak of understanding entered his mind.

"I?" he said. "Don't you know me, Olga? I'm John Hulder. You're going to marry me soon. I was Fiodor's friend."

"Oh, yes," she said, "Fiodor's friend. I remember now. But Fiodor is dead; you have no friend."

He seized her hand. "But I have you, Olga, my darling."

Gently she freed her hand.

"But don't you understand? You were Fiodor's friend and he is dead. That's all, isn't it?"

Moved by some terrible premonition, he threw his arms about her, kissed her on the mouth. For a second she submitted to the caress, then suddenly thrust him back. Her voice rose to a cry: "Who are you? I don't know you. Let me go! I say, let me go!"

She put her hand to his chin, thrust him away, ran to the door. "I'm going to Munich!" she shouted. "Let me go!" she screamed again, as if she were being held. "I must go to Munich, now."

Hulder ran down the stairs, conscious only, in the turmoil of his mind, that he must follow her, but she was winged with despair. Already she had fled through the front garden; he could hear her running upon the road. He was gaining upon her, already her footsteps sounded louder. Then he lost them. He realized that she must have taken the short cut on the right, down the steep little path that ran from the brewery. Stumbling in the darkness of the plantation, he followed her, but heard her footsteps no more. He must have been wrong, he thought. He retraced his footsteps, but he had lost her, and when, a quarter of an hour later, he arrived at Ammenberg, he was told that, a minute before, Olga had hired the motor car at the Wagenhof and driven away to Munich. The suicide was known in the town, and Hulder found himself the object of curiosity as an associate of the dead. But he paid no attention to questions and condolences; as he walked to Treitzen's shop to tell Elsa the truth in case she had not heard it, there was but one thought in his mind: he had been told at the Wagenhof that Olga was not crying, but that she seemed filled with an ungovernable rage, that she had abused the proprietor and the chauffeur, called the latter by names which no lady would use. Except, added the proprietor, under the stress of emotion.

Hulder could not understand. Olga weeping, Olga prostrate, that would have been natural, but Olga blaspheming,

raging at fate—this was something he could not grasp. He knew only that he was in contact with a temperament the reactions of which he could not understand, and it added to his anxiety and his pain that the thread of his life should have become entangled with some other strand that threatened to make of it something he could no longer follow.

Elsa, at least, gave him the satisfaction of her greater obviousness. She already knew, had been told, and her father allowed him to see her for a few minutes. While Hulder knelt by the side of the girl's bed, where she lay, still white-faced and quite exhausted, Treitzen, who did not understand, stood in a corner of the room, his large, pink cheeks shaken by sobs, and his good-humored eyes swollen with the tears that his daughter's incomprehensible misery had called up. Elsa did not reply to the words of comfort which Hulder mechanically gave her, nor did she weep. She was too exhausted. At last only did she murmur:

"I must go to him. I must see him once more."

"Yes," said Hulder gently. "You shall, Elsa; you shall."

"Take me with you now," she said.

"No, not now; tomorrow. I'll take you tomorrow."

"No, no," she cried, more shrilly, clasping both his hands. "Now! Tonight!"

She tried to sit up in her bed, but Hulder easily forced her back upon the pillow.

"No; you must be reasonable, you must rest. Tomorrow morning, I promise you—there, do you hear?—I promise you, tomorrow morning."

Elsa did not reply. As a child she was controlled. Besides, her weariness was such that a command from another served her as a will. As Hulder tiptoed out of the room he saw that her cheek lay on the pillow, and that her features were relaxing. In another minute, as an exhausted child, she would be asleep.

Alone he went to the station. In three-quarters of an hour he was at Munich. From the station he was sent to the police office, thence to the mortu-

ary. But it was nine o'clock; the mortuary was closed. The custodian said he must come in the morning.

"But I want to see him now," cried the American.

He did not know why he wanted to see his friend. Perhaps, he thought, by some mysterious means Olga had gained access to him.

"Oh, you all say that," replied the official. "There was a young lady here an hour ago; she, too, wanted to see him. I told her to come tomorrow morning. It is the rule."

So Olga had come. A brief description and a coin drew confirmation of this.

"She made a nice row," said the man. "Had to have her taken away by the police. Ridiculous, I call it."

Taken away by the police! Hulder dominated his pain, for the desire was still in him.

"I'd like to see him tonight," said Hulder, taking some silver from his pocket.

The official shook his head:

"Impossible. It is the rule. Besides," he added, with a laugh, "you'll find him all right in the morning. *Wird nit wegrennel!*"

As Hulder walked away, the brutal words echoed in his head. No, Fiodor wouldn't run away. For two hours he searched Munich, though he knew that his chance of finding Olga was small. He thought of inquiring at the hotels, but there were hundreds of them, and, besides, who could say what Olga had done? At eleven o'clock he suddenly realized he had had no food for ten hours. He ate hurriedly, standing up at the station buffet. In another hour he was at the Kaiserhof, upon his balcony. Olga had not returned. And when at dawn at last he threw himself upon his bed, haunted by anxieties, horrible, incomprehensible intimations of personal disaster, she was still missing.

XII

WHEN, next morning, the doors of the mortuary opened, Hulder stood waiting with Fiodor's beloved. The girl had

been dressed in black by her conventional father. She was not weeping, and on the journey had not said a word. In fact, only once altogether had she broken silence, and that was when passing a florist's she had asked Hulder to buy some white flowers. It was bearing in her arms a great bunch of lilies that she entered the chamber of the dead. As Hulder looked upon the face of his friend, for a moment he forgot the pre-occupation which had been filling him: Olga's disappearance and her attitude to him.

The mortuary was a small room, painted brownish green. There were four inclined stone slabs upon which trickled a little water. Three of the slabs were empty; on the fourth lay Fiodor. His face had not changed; it was much as in life: yellowish, a little drawn. The lips were parted, showing the beautiful teeth. And, as if nature had given way before death, or as if death had been decent, the mass of black hair that in life hung over his left eyebrow had fallen over the right so as to hide the bullet hole in the temple.

For some moments those two stood silently before the body. They had, both of them, been too racked to feel much emotion. There was no sound save in the corner the clicking of the mortuary keeper's keys as he watched the scene with an air of boredom.

"That's the gentleman, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Hulder.

"Oh, you'll have to sign to identify in the office." He nodded toward the door, then stifled a yawn.

Elsa drew nearer to the body, bent down, recoiled for an instant as if afraid, bent down again and softly kissed the dead man's forehead. Then, with uncertain hands, she spread the lilies over the body, lilies upon his breast, and lilies by his side. She stopped; there was a catch in her breath; she repressed a sob, bent down to arrange about Fiodor's head a crown of lilies. As she did so Hulder heard the opening of a door, a sound—and then another sound.

"Ah! Ah!" cried the voice. "Lilies—lilies—how funny!"

He turned. Olga stood in the doorway, her hands clasped together, hatless, her hair matted and falling over her face. But her eyes were not wild; they seemed clear and purposeful.

"Lilies!" she cried. "Like lace on a wound. You've come in good time, little fool, with your lilies."

She came closer to Elsa, stood face to face with her.

"So you've come to see what you've done?" she said. Her voice was very low and distinct. "You've come to see the man you've killed because you didn't love him?"

Elsa started back, frightened, her hands outspread as if to defend herself.

"Because you didn't love him," repeated Olga, still in low tones.

"Oh, I did, I did," moaned Elsa, "only—"

"Only you were afraid—only you were a coward—because you were ready to play with him and deceive him—and betray him—because you were willing to make his wretched life a greater hell."

"Oh, no, no!"

"Yes, yes!" cried Olga, louder. "Miserable little fool! Did you not then know how proud you should have been—that he should turn to you—oh, such a man to such a one as you! It was like the sun shining upon a weed, and you ruined him, and you killed him; but for you he would have lived. How dared you do such a thing? How dared you be such a fool?"

She took a quick step forward. Elsa recoiled.

"Coward!" shouted Olga, and then again: "Coward!"

Before Hulder could move Olga had suddenly swung her arm back, and in the same movement, with the full weight of arm and body, had struck Elsa upon the cheek so terrible a blow that the girl reeled back and would have fallen if she had not encountered the wall. And there, for some moments, while Hulder seized Olga from behind, she remained, trembling, her hands against her mouth, and upon her cheek the purplish mark of four fingers.

"Olga! Olga!" cried Hulder desperately.

Through all his sorrow there ran again a conventional feeling: that one should not wrangle in the chamber of death. But, as he touched her, suddenly Olga freed herself.

"Don't touch me!" she cried. "How dare you touch me? I don't know you. Leave me alone, all of you."

She made a movement with both arms as if to sweep the room clear.

"But, Olga!" cried Hulder. In that moment he forgot that others heard him. "I love you. Don't you remember? And you love me."

There was a long pause. Then Olga spoke quite quietly:

"Love you? I never loved you. Oh, no, perhaps I did love you, but Fiodor was alive then. He wanted you, needed you. But now he is dead. Don't you see what a difference that makes?"

"Olga, I beg you—"

"But don't you understand? He is dead; it is all different now. I can't see you any more; you are no longer there."

And Hulder, as he heard the low voice speaking philosophical abstractions, suddenly had a horrible thrill as if it were the dead man who had spoken. But energy had come into Olga. She shouted:

"Go away, all of you! All of you—now!" She seized the flowers. "Take away your lilies, all of you—and go." She seized Elsa by the arm, dragged her to the door. "Go, little coward, before I kill you. And you, too," she cried, seizing Hulder. And with sudden, irresistible strength, driving them toward the door:

"Go away, all of you, and leave me with my dead."

Bewildered, they stood in the corridor. The official was with them, still jangling his keys. He nodded toward a little window.

"You can see through there," he said.

Hulder bent toward the pane. Upon her knees by the side of the stone slab was Olga. Bathed in the reflected greenish light, her hands and neck had assumed the color of the corpse's features. She knelt, quite motionless, her lax hands upon Fiodor's breast, her eyes hidden in his cape. There was no movement in her as she communed with her dead.

Then, little by little, Hulder found that the official was urging him with Elsa toward the identification bureau. A register was opened before him. Mechanically he signed. As he did so, he heard the custodian's voice coming from some far-away region where lay shattered the dream of love, the hopes, the ambitions and the desires, all the sweetness of love ground into powder by death. He did not know what the man was saying; he seemed to be talking a great deal. Hulder knew that all was over, that between him and Olga there had never been anything save the bridge that Fiodor built. And now Fiodor lay upon the stone slab; the bridge was broken. Between him and Olga was a chasm across which never more could a bridge be thrown. Oh, what was that the custodian was saying?

"Lord! The young lady did make a fuss! They do now and then."

He yawned.



A HUSBAND never appreciates his wife so thoroughly as when she is good enough to realize that he loves her truly all the time he is too busy to be bothered with her.



THE happiest girl is she to whom a great variety of hats is becoming.

SONGS OF MARRIED LOVE

By Ludwig Lewisohn

AN ANNIVERSARY

Dear heart, the spirit ranges,
Nor finds one goodly thing;
Life slays and death estranges,
And pride and power take wing:
Love only knows no changes
From sounding spring to spring.

And we, who have known his glory
From face to fervid face,
We, who have heard his story,
Have lived within his grace,
Should know how transitory
All else on mortal ways.

II

SHE

She has not asked, but understood
Her soul's diviner end,
The sweetness of her womanhood
True lover, wife and friend.

Her eyes for many an alien dawn
Have striven to watch and wake,
Her feet on barren ways have gone
For Love's immortal sake.

Far from the bugles of the fray
Have been her gentle deeds,
But where, upon the fall of day
The Ideal's champion bleeds.

And when, upon the farther shore
I see her pallid hands,
I know that she will lead me o'er
Into God's greater lands.

WILDCATS

By Freeman Tilden

THERE was a time—and not so many years ago—when these United States abounded with a type of business man commonly and flatteringly known as “hard-headed.” It is believed that this type is passing out, or at least undergoing some change. Possibly, in the judging of heads, too much credit was formerly given to the mere osseous tendency. . . .

It was to the hard-headed business man that the pre-election orator appealed to save the country from the opposition and consequent bowwows. It was to the hard-headed business man that the newspapers always referred with pride. If you wanted to start a movement, or organize a committee, the first thing you had to do was to find a hard-headed business man.

A large quantity of moonbeam mining stock and other nebulous investment paper that has gone around the United States in the last twenty years is in the top bureau drawers of the hard-headed business men. They have long given up the idea of realizing on it. Every once in a while they take out that little bundle of certificates, look them over and scratch their hard business heads. They are the men that considered first mortgages on real estate a little bit risky.

This will serve to introduce to you four of the hardest-headed business men in the country—all residents of the town of Starrton: Washington Peckham, the shoe man, known to his intimates as “Wash”; J. Q. A. Flickens, the popular grocer, commonly called “Quincy”; Horace Wellspeak, drygoods and notions, just across from the Odd Fellows’ Block; and Dillingham Perkins (“Dill,” they call him), the hardware man.

I am taking you into the best company of Starrton when I introduce you to these men. They are the solid men of the community. They own one automobile each; they go to church regularly, except Mr. Flickens, who is a Christian Scientist, and combats malicious thought currents at home; and nothing important has been mentioned to their discredit in all the years of their business life.

Reader, meet these gentlemen! Gentlemen, meet the reader! What will you have?

It was Saturday afternoon in Starrton. Of course it was Saturday afternoon in other places, too; but the point is that the Merchants’ Club had just voted to have a half-holiday every week, and this was the first under the new rule. Consequently there were a number of persons in Starrton that did not know what to do with themselves, and among these were four employers of labor; to wit, the gentlemen to whom you have just been introduced.

“Wash” Peckham, after dinner, came downtown and strolled into the Commercial Hotel. It happened that Messrs. Flickens and Perkins had also entered the hotel, and were sitting at the front windows with their feet on the iron rail stretched across the windows for that purpose. Soon afterward Horace Wellspeak, sauntering around restlessly, came into the hotel for a cigar. So the four hard-headed business men met in a conclave of leisure, and had conversation in low and confidential tones.

They mentioned the good old days of the Dingley tariff, and how the agitators are killing business. They spoke of col-

lections, and compared experiences with the town deadbeats. Somebody spoke of Socialism, and Mr. Flickens disposed of that political error in perpetuity by saying that if property should be all divided up, as he understood was the basic idea of the thing, it wouldn't be long before the able men would have it all back again, together with garnishees on the other folks' wages. The drama came under discussion for an instant, when "Wash" Peckham remarked that, after all, they have no such shows in these days as "Human Hearts." There was more of this . . .

And then Horace Wellspeak, apropos of nothing in particular, said:

"Do you know anything about Kamchatka Copper?"

"I've heard of a mining stock by that name," replied "Dill" Perkins. "You bought some of it, Horace?"

"No," replied the dealer in drygoods.

"Speaking of stocks," said Mr. Perkins, with a tone of disinterestedness, "has anybody heard of a 'Collapsible Canoe' proposition? They say it's a pretty good thing."

"I never heard of it," said "Wash" Peckham, amid a general headshaking negation. "You got some, Dill?"

"Oh, no," replied Mr. Peckham. "I just thought you might have heard of it."

Mr. Flickens had been exceedingly interested in the questions and answers. He looked around at his companions for a moment, as though in doubt whether to speak. Finally he cleared his throat and said: "I don't suppose anybody here has heard anything about Vulture?"

"Vulture what?" asked the shoe dealer.

"It's a radium mine," replied the grocer. Then he added, protectively: "I think."

"How many shares you got of it?" was the laconic question.

Mr. Flickens laughed a low, superior sort of laugh. "I guess not," he replied. "My money comes too hard."

Dill Perkins sat long in thought. "I was just wondering," he said, "about some stock I've got at home. My brother-in-law in Kansas gave it to me

last Christmas as a present. I swan if I didn't lay it by somewhere and forget all about it until this minute! If I remember it rightly, it's called by the name of Cobalt Dingbat, and the mines are in Canady."

The rest of the men looked at Dill Perkins with silent admiration. They admired his imaginative power. He had had an inspiration. He had put a brother-in-law at work for him. They were ordinary liars. He was a liar with a flourish and a filip.

There was a long silence, during which the four hard-headed business men looked out the window at the deserted and dusty square, and sent economical wavelets of smoke toward the panes of glass.

Suddenly Wash Peckham rose and walked back a little distance from the window, and looked around. The clerk was at the desk, half asleep. A porter was sitting at a cold radiator, sound asleep. The clock was noisy. Mr. Peckham's reconnoitering discovered no possible eavesdroppers. He came back to the group and asked:

"Did any of you ever hear of a man, or see one, by the name of Montagu De Blon?"

Three men shook their heads sagely.

"I'll describe him to you," continued Mr. Peckham. "He's quite tall, with black curly hair, dresses fit to kill, has a little mustache with ends that stick out straight in a point, and he wears patent leather shoes and a long cutaway coat. And he is a very good talker. Know him?"

Three men again shook their heads, albeit they hitched a little in their chairs.

"He was here not so long ago," went on Mr. Peckham, "and I understand he sold a lot of stock here, of one thing or another."

"Now I do remember," said Mr. Wellspeak, "some such fellow called on me. But it was a busy day, and I told him I couldn't talk with him."

There was more silence. "His name is Montagu De Blon," went on Mr. Peckham, hammering on the nail in the good old New England fashion. "I should judge he was a foreigner."

"Well, what about him?" asked Mr. Flickens quietly.

"Well, nothing in particular," was the reply—"except that he registered here at the Commercial Hotel just before noon today."

Three men said "What!" almost simultaneously, and then, reddening considerably, subsided into their chairs and assumed indifference.

The clock ticked. The hotel porter snored industriously. Mr. Wellspeak's cigar went out and he flung it into the cuspidor. A man driving three cows passed the windows. A dog ran across the street. Somebody over in front of the drugstore was whistling "Silver Threads Among the Gold."

Mr. Flickens rose and stretched himself. "Funny," he said, "how some folks get taken in by the most barefaced swindles. I guess I'll go home and have a nap."

Next Mr. Perkins got out of his chair. "Beats all," he remarked. "When there are so many good investments right at home. Well, my sweet corn needs hoeing. So long!"

Mr. Wellspeak looked at Mr. Peckham. Mr. Peckham looked at Mr. Wellspeak. There was a silent and tacit agreement to say nothing. They shook hands and went out by opposite doors.

When Mr. Flickens left the hotel he went across to his grocery store, unlocked the door and went in. Then he took up a position far enough back from the window to be invisible, yet in eye range of the door of the Commercial Hotel.

When Mr. Perkins left the group he also went to his store, and took up much the same point of vantage. Likewise did Messrs. Wellspeak and Peckham. So it happened that, at one and the same time, four pairs of eyes were fastened on the entrance of the hotel.

After a while Mr. Flickens opened the door of the grocery store and peered out. The street was free of bystanders, at least of the obnoxious kind. Mr. Flickens then turned the key in the lock and hustled across the street to the side door of the hotel, paused a moment on the steps, and went quickly inside.

Coincidentally with this act, three men, from their crow's nests, spoke bitterly to themselves.

"Darn his hide!" said Mr. Wellspeak.

"The cuss!" ejaculated Mr. Peckham.

"Just like Quincy Flickens!" was the comment of Mr. Perkins.

Meanwhile Mr. Flickens, the popular grocer, approached the desk and inquired as to the whereabouts of Montagu De Blon.

"I think he's in his room," replied the clerk. "Shall I have him come down?"

Mr. Flickens looked around cautiously. "No," he replied. "I'd better go up."

"I'll send up the boy with your name."

"If it's all the same to you, Henry, I'll go up," said the grocer. "If my name was to go up, I've got an idea Mr. De Blon wouldn't be there."

"I guess it's all right, Mr. Flickens. Go right up."

Mr. De Blon, as a matter of fact, was very much in his room. He was *en deshabillé*, sitting at the open window, with his feet cocked up on the sill, studying the "Business Directory of the State," and making careful notations on what he referred to, in private, as his "sucker list." On his sucker list appeared, as you may have guessed, the names of Messrs. Peckham, Flickens, Wellspeak and Perkins, all of Starrton.

There was a hesitating knock on the door. Mr. De Blon's feet came down from the sill, and he asked: "Who is it?"

A male voice outside answered, so Mr. De Blon neglected to conceal his excellent underwear, and called: "Come in!"

Mr. Flickens came in. He stood at the door a moment, and then cried: "Mr. De Blon, you are a swindler!"

"Shut the door," said Mr. De Blon, as though this was the ordinary and expected greeting between business men. "And take off your coat, if you want to. Ain't it hot!"

Mr. Flickens ignored the remark. He put his hat on the bed and stood with his eyes searching the face of the other man for evidence of guilt. "I'll have the law on you, sure as you live," he threatened. "You've got a cheek to come back here, I must say! You and your Vulture Radium!"

"It's a good proposition," replied Mr. De Blon, without winking an eyelash. "It has had reverses. So do many good companies. Look at the New Haven! Look at Rock Island!"

"I don't want to look at New Haven—no, nor Rock Island," replied the grocer. "I want you to take back that worthless stock, and give me my money, or there'll be trouble."

"I don't want any trouble," admitted the other man in his melodious voice. In fact, he almost sang it. "Have you got your stock here?"

Mr. Flickens shook his head. "But I can get it in a jiffy," he said.

"Come to the hotel at eight o'clock tonight, and cash it in, if you've got cold feet. But I warn you the day will come when you'll be sorry."

"I'll take a chance on that," replied the grocer. "But this eight o'clock business—I don't much care for that. Chances are you'll be miles away by that time."

There was a suggestion of a sneer in Mr. De Blon's soft voice. "Surround the hotel with militia," he advised. "Arm them to the teeth, and train your guns on the windows."

The grocer reddened to the ears. "All right," he said. "I'll be here." Then he went downstairs.

At the door of the hotel he met Mr. Perkins coming in. "Ah, Dill," he said, "back again? I left my handkerchief on the chair."

"Funny," replied Mr. Perkins, "I lost my glasses somewhere. Came back to see if I could find them."

Mr. Perkins did not find his glasses. One reason was because they were in his pocket. Another reason was because he did not look for them. He got the number of Montagu De Blon's room from the clerk, and went gingerly upstairs and knocked.

Mr. De Blon laid aside his sucker list without the least show of impatience. He listened to the impassioned display of invective from the hardware dealer, with no visible surprise, indignation or other feeling except sympathetic interest.

"What is the matter with Collapsible Canoe?" he asked.

"The big matter with it is, it has collapsed," replied the hardware man with grim humor. "And you knew it would, you faker."

"It is still sold on the curb," reminded the itinerant broker.

"Not on any curb I can get to, to sell mine. Now, Mr. Man, I've frivoleed away enough time as it is. Are you going to make good, or am I going to get out a warrant for you?"

"I wish Mr. Flickens were here," sighed Mr. De Blon.

"Flickens!" cried the hardware man. "What for?"

"He would speak for me. He could tell you some things that I can't very well tell myself; because you wouldn't believe them if I told them. But if you want to withdraw from Collapsible Canoe just at the psychological moment, that's your loss, not mine. Come around at eight fifteen tonight and get your money—in full. Is that all right?"

"It is if you'll be here," replied the hardware man.

"Tear up the railroad tracks on both sides of the station," suggested the broker, with a pleasant smile and just a touch of irony.

"All right," was the sheepish reply. "Quarter past eight, then."

The exit of Mr. Perkins from the hotel was observed with relief by Mr. Wellspeak in the drygoods store and Mr. Peckham in the shoe emporium. Unaware of similar intentions, they emerged from their hiding places at the same moment. Mr. Peckham perceived Mr. Wellspeak first, and had time to dart back before being noticed. Mr. Wellspeak, on the other hand, strode into the hotel with the air of a man who has just come from home on an errand.

In a few minutes he came out, and soon afterward Mr. Peckham went in.

Their interviews had been short and satisfactory. Both had been somewhat personal in their first remarks to Mr. De Blon, but the sublime poise and good humor of that gentleman, together with his willing compliance with all demands, had mellowed them much. Both left the hotel with light steps and carefree countenances.

After the ordeal was over, Mr. De Blon stuck his head out the window and surveyed the square. He rang for a boy and inquired of the clerk whether there were any more persons waiting to see him. Upon receiving a negative answer, he began to dress himself from an ideal and up-to-date wardrobe trunk.

Mr. De Blon laid his sucker list down on the chiffonier, where he could review it while adjusting his tie. Suddenly he smiled and sat down on the edge of the bed, and gave voice to this optimistic sentiment:

"Once a sucker, always a sucker!"

Mr. De Blon wrote on the back of a card the following appointments, exercising the greatest care to get them in the exact order:

8 o'clock, Mr. Flickens.

8:15, Mr. Perkins.

8:30, Mr. Wellspeak.

8:45, Mr. Peckham.

Then Mr. De Blon, who was in a very jovial and happy frame of mind, took out his superb thin-model watch, and saw sixty seconds marked off by the second hand. When the circle had been completed, and the sixtieth second was reached, Mr. De Blon remarked,

"Another one has just been born."

If there was one class of men whose psychology was better understood by Montagu De Blon than any other class, it was the hard-headed business man. He knew, for instance, that the hard-headed business man has much in common with that heroine of Shakespeare who never told her love, but let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on her damask cheek. He knew that the hard-headed business man never tells his investments, but prefers to let the canker of deferred dividends nibble at his bank roll.

A merchant in a small town like Starrton is, so far as his customers are permitted to know, always just able to meet his bills. If the customers of Mr. Flickens, the popular grocer, were to learn that Mr. Flickens actually had a surplus of money to invest, they might reasonably refuse to pay their accounts, on the democratic ground that Flickens

was rich enough already and was grinding the noses of the poor. Thus it happens that long after the town pauper has acquired a two-cylinder automobile, the tradesman is still driving a wornout buggy behind Old Bess, and clinging to his celluloid collars.

This policy of secretiveness was well known to Montagu De Blon, and was his bulwark in times of stress.

About twenty minutes before eight o'clock Mr. De Blon took from his handbag a large folded linen map of Peru, and spread it out on the table that occupied the center of the room. He likewise took out a squarish block of dark-colored substance, which rebounded to the touch, and placed that on the map. Then he unfastened his beautiful diamond necktie pin and, looking fondly at the map of the Peruvian republic, toyed with the pin and awaited the hour of eight.

Thus, when Mr. Flickens rapped and entered, almost on the stroke of the town clock, he found the stock peddler gazing at the map and just in the act of stabbing a certain remote village with the pin point.

"Ah, Mr. Flickens," said the stock seller, *"there is wealth! Untold wealth!"*

"Where?" was the natural response of a man who dreamed of sudden enrichment o' nights.

"There! Where the pin is sticking. Putobamba, the heart of the richest rubber country in the world. There's a sample. Pure Para rubber, first grade stuff, worth its weight in gold."

Mr. Flickens pushed at the elastic mass with his finger, and was about to inquire further, when he recollected that he had come to the room for another purpose. "I brought that stock," he said, showing a large envelope.

"Good! Have a chair. Putobamba, Mr. Flickens. Remember that name. It's Spanish. It's a name to conjure with in the investment world today. Do you know"—here Mr. De Blon's voice fell to a purring confidence—"who is buying Putobamba, secretly?"

"No," replied Mr. Flickens.

Mr. De Blon walked over close to the popular grocer—because even the walls

have ears. He leaned down and whispered the first letter of a magic name "R."

"Rock—" uttered Mr. Flickens, shrewdly.

"Something like that," was the quizzical reply. "You're not such a bad guesser."

"I guessed wrong on Vulture Radium," replied Mr. Flickens soberly.

"I'm not so sure about that, Mr. Flickens. I'll admit the company has had reverses. Look at New Haven. Look at Rock Island—"

"I have looked at them," responded the grocer. "But it's when I look at Vulture Radium that I—"

Mr. De Blon laughed. "Don't worry," he said. "I'll take it off your hands. I'll hold it myself—though I've got about all the stuff I can look out for. Besides, I don't mind telling you that every cent I can spare is going right here." And he touched the pin that perforated the richest spot in the world—Putobamba.

"Putobamba," repeated Mr. Flickens. The clever reader will observe, if he repeat the word "Putobamba" to himself a number of times, a certain hypnotizing effect of the syllables.

"Putobamba," purred Mr. De Blon. "You know rubber costs money, Mr. Flickens."

"Gosh, yes," assented the grocer, thinking of automobile tires.

"They talk about planting rubber trees," continued the salesman ironically. "Planting them! I'd rather throw my money into the street than plant rubber trees with it. It's the wild trees, the big native trees, that are found in the heart of the Peruvian jungle—those are the little gold mines of vegetable life.

"But you came to cash in on that other stuff. I'm letting my enthusiasm kill too much time. Now we'll—"

"Putobamba!" said Mr. Flickens softly to himself.

"Putobamba," replied Mr. De Blon.

Mr. Flickens rose and looked on the map. He followed the line of the gold pin down to a spot on the map that was surrounded with a red line.

"Everything inside that red line is our concession from the Peruvian gov-

ernment," explained Mr. De Blon, without being asked.

"That's where they practise terrible cruelty on the natives, to force them to get rubber," remarked Mr. Flickens, who read the papers carefully.

Mr. De Blon showed a worried face. "Mr. Flickens," he said, "you've put your finger on the weak spot in this proposition. Do you think—do you think for a minute—that this stock would be selling for fifty-five cents a share if there wasn't something the matter with it? You've nailed it on the head. There is something the matter with it. There is terrible cruelty down there. That's why a lot of people won't go into it. I don't blame you for not wanting to touch it. The way they treat those Indians is a crying outrage!"

Mr. Flickens hesitated a moment. "Indians are usually a poor lot," he suggested.

"Putobamba," muttered Mr. De Blon, to himself.

"Putobamba," replied Mr. Flickens, not with his mouth, but with his brain.

"I could allow you what you paid for Vulture Radium," said Mr. De Blon. "But, mind you, I don't deny the stories of cruelty. They're true. It's—damnable."

"My great-great-grandfather was scalped by an Indian," was the reply. "I got no use for the critters. If you'll come to my store Monday, during the noon hour, I'd like to hear more about this proposition. I don't mind trading this other stuff for something—"

There was a knock. "Come in!" ordered Mr. De Blon; and Mr. Perkins, the hardware man, entered.

"Perkins!" exclaimed Flickens.

"Flickens!" cried Perkins.

"Mr. Flickens," said the stock peddler, in what was perhaps an unnecessarily penetrating voice, "do you mind saying, before you go, that you are satisfied with my business treatment of you?"

Not for a thousand worlds would Mr. Flickens, in the presence of Mr. Perkins, have denied any such thing. He held out his hand and took Mr. De Blon's in his. "Absolutely!" he said.

"Thank you, sir."

When Mr. Flickens had gone, Mr. Perkins remarked, in a chill tone: "I can see that Flickens didn't buy Collapsible Canoe."

"No, he didn't," replied the other. "But don't you worry. I'll take it off your hands dollar for dollar. And, Mr. Perkins, *there* is wealth! Untold wealth!"

"Where?" asked Mr. Perkins, looking around him.

"*There!* Where the pin is sticking. Putobamba, the heart of the richest rubber country in the world. There's a sample. Pure Para rubber, first grade stuff, worth its weight in gold."

"Huh!" exclaimed Mr. Perkins.

"Putobamba," said Mr. De Blon. "Do you know?"—in a low, almost inaudible tone—"who is buying Putobamba, secretly?"

And, strange to say, Mr. Perkins, like Mr. Flickens, guessed right the very first time. And likewise did Mr. Wellspeak and Mr. Peckham.

It was a Saturday night in the late autumn. It was the Saturday night that the Starrton Lodge of Gazelles gave their first annual oyster supper in the Grange Hall, over the fire station. Among those present were:

Washington Peckham, the shoe man, known to his intimates as "Wash"; J. Q. A. Flickens, the popular grocer, commonly called "Quincy"; Horace Wellspeak, drygoods and notions, just across from the Odd Fellows' Block; and Dillingham Perkins ("Dill," they call him), the hardware man.

A peculiar feature of oyster suppers, as well as of other forms of entertainment in Starrton, is that most of the males in attendance enjoy the diversion by absenting themselves as far as possible from the scene of festivities. That is, if you want to find those who are most supremely getting their money's worth, you want to look in some anteroom or thither corner. There sit a group of gentlemen, smoking and telling stories, and blissfully unconscious of what is going on at the firing line of oyster.

Wash Peckham and Quincy Flickens and Horace Wellspeak and Dill Perkins, having accompanied their respective

consorts as far as the refreshment table, withdrew to the happy quiet of the smoking room, opened a fresh deck of cards and began to play bid whist.

It was Horace Wellspeak's deal, and Mr. Perkins had just cut the cards when Wash Peckham remarked, in an inconsequential tone: "I hear some talk of putting an electric road through here to Williamsville."

"There's a promoter in town now," added Mr. Flickens.

"It won't pay," said Mr. Wellspeak.

"Money thrown away," said Mr. Perkins.

"The promoter says the preferred will be sold at par, with a bonus of common stock," suggested Mr. Wellspeak.

"Risky business," replied Mr. Flickens.

"Not for my money," said Mr. Perkins.

"Nor mine."

"Not for me."

"Nope."

"Speaking of investments," said Mr. Wellspeak, "what do you think of the idea of putting up a new block here in the village?"

"Can't see it," said Mr. Perkins.

"Nor I."

"Enough blocks now," said Mr. Flickens.

"Just so," said Mr. Peckham.

"They talk of developing water power from the Black River, just above Chelsea, and supplying all these towns and cities below with light and power," said Mr. Peckham, after a moment's silence.

"Wild idea," said Mr. Wellspeak.

"Engineers want some big fees for plans; that's the game," said Mr. Perkins.

"Don't believe it could be done, anyway," said Mr. Flickens.

"Funny what suckers they take us for, these so-called big financiers," said Mr. Peckham.

"Frenzied finance is the biggest reason for the high cost of living," remarked Mr. Wellspeak.

"What little money I can save, over and above my expenses," observed Mr. Perkins, "goes into the savings bank. Four per cent in the hand is worth ten per cent that you never get."

"Or for a reasonable extension of business," said Mr. Flickens.

Mr. Peckham leaned back in his chair and crossed his long legs just above the ankles. "I stopped into the hotel on my way down here," he said; and blew a ring of smoke up at the kerosene lamp above their heads.

Then he went on: "And whose name should I see on the register but Montagu De Blon!"

"Montagu De Blon?" asked Mr. Flickens, as though the name were somehow familiar but memory refused to respond lucidly.

"Montagu De Blon?" asked Mr. Well-speak, struggling to recall anybody of his acquaintance by that peculiar name.

"Montagu De Blon?" asked Mr. Perkins, wonderingly.

"I did a hard day's work, and I'm beginning to feel sleepy," said the popular grocer.

"It's the furnace heat and the smoke," replied the shoe man. "I'm about ready to get my wife and go home."

"Mrs. Perkins' mother is with us,"

said the hardware dealer. "We don't like to leave the old lady alone long."

"Cards don't interest me as they did in my younger days," said the fourth tradesman.

And so the hard-headed business men of Starrton gathered up their families and departed at an hour that was considered, by their families, absurdly early. But there are many oyster suppers, and only one Montagu De Blon.

Yes, there are many oyster suppers in Starrton, taking one year with another; but there is only one rich rubber district in the world, and that is in Peru. There is only one place where six thousand dollars' worth of celery can be raised on one acre of land, and that is in the Florida Everglades. There is only one opportunity to become a part owner of the biggest deposits of Vanadium ore on the five continents—and that is in Van Dusen's Land, near the Arctic Circle.

Reader, meet the hard-headed business men! Hard-headed business men, meet the reader! What will you have?



THE WINDS OF GOD

By Charles Wharton Stork

IN great glad waves the winds go by
But dull in the chimney corner I
Stir never a step for their eager cry.

With fife and with swelling shout they urge
My soul to blend with their onward surge.
I shrink; their music falls to a dirge.

Yet still, as their passing voices yearn,
With strange weak dread I tremble and burn.—
Oh, the winds of God they never return!



THE mirror of the soul often reflects a painted face.

LEIGHFORD VERSUS JETENFOU

By Herman Marcus

THEY were twin maidens of forty—of at least forty. When but girls, they had studied painting in a very select school in London and then gone to the home of an old aunt who lived near Guildford, in Surrey. Here they made hundreds of studies along the River Wey and signed them "J. and J. Leighford."

Somehow London did not seem to realize the worth of their work; but they themselves knew its value, and told each other how fine it was. At last, after about fifteen years of Guildford, they began to confess to one another that their talent was being wasted. England did not appreciate "true art." One could not endure a country where critics could allude to such work as theirs as "chromesque." They *would* not endure it. They would go to France.

This idea fell flat for want of funds; their aunt could not be persuaded to meet with their views. "If one cannot paint in England, one cannot paint in France," she said—"and besides, Paris is no fit place for two young girls." They were then in their later thirties.

When they were "at least forty," their aunt died, leaving them six hundred pounds a year and the house. At last they were free; and preceded by a letter from the mayor of Guildford, and armed with their school French, they went to Paris.

The English colony there had founded a young ladies' seminary at Le Pecq. It was called Le Colombier. Here the daughters of the colony could be taught cricket, tennis, the correct kind of parlor French and "Art." One of the mothers had written the mayor of Guildford—a distant relative—to inquire if he could

advise her as to an art teacher who spoke English, who was correct and who was a lady. The letter made no mention of the applicant's ability to draw or paint.

The mayor had no great artistic sense, but it is suspected that he had a sense of humor. He told the Misses Leighford of the school just outside of Paris, and they said that it was a gift from heaven.

They were going to Paris—not to study but to teach! At last recognition had come. London would wake up when it saw what Paris thought of their work.

They arrived in bobby curls, brown silk waists, real gray hair and false brown glasses, flat shoes and silk gloves. Le Colombier, that extremely respectable seminary, upon realizing their correctness, welcomed them gravely. Gradually becoming aware of their lady-likeness, it offered them tea; and on being informed that they would "instruct the young ladies in 'Art'" for the same yearly fee as if there were but one teacher, instead of two, it engaged them both.

There were but twelve girls at Le Colombier when the Leighfords arrived, about twice that number having gone with their parents to Switzerland or the seaside for the summer. These twelve girls were in the studio on the top of the house. It was a large room with windows and a skylight. The Leighfords were beginning their first day by a talk to the girls.

As most of them had studied in Paris, it had been decided to give them a "live model," and in she came just as Jane was finishing the speech. She came forward among the easels rather timidly,

although she would have been perfectly at home in a studio full of men back in the city—as any one of a thousand students could have told you. For it was little Marcelle des Fossettes who had come; little Marcelle, who well earned her pet name by two of the most delicious dimples, placed in just the right spot in that most adorable back of hers. And very unlike herself she felt, as she stood there surrounded by so many strangers, foreigners, who couldn't understand. Also she felt queer because she had walked all the way from the Rue l'Epée du Bois without any breakfast that morning. Joseph had done all that he could—"poor little dear of a white mouse," she thought. The great artist, Gontran, for whom he had been posing for the last two months, would not pay. Last night Joseph and she had gone to a café; he had played his mandolin and she had sung, and so they had been supplied with supper. But this morning there was no time. She must leave early and walk fast if she was to get the job at Le Colombier, as advertised. Also Joseph was going once more to beg the great artist for a small part of what he owed.

It is easily understood, therefore, why Marcelle felt strange. She bowed to the young ladies and presented herself to the Misses Leighford.

"What's your name?" snapped Miss Jane, in very poor French.

"Marcelle," she answered very modestly.

"Marcelle what?" put in Miss Julia, looking her up and down, from her trim little hat to her worn and dusty shoes, with great disfavor.

"Marcelle des Fossettes." The girls tittered. The Leighfords did not understand, and Jane said:

"We will call you Miss Fossettes."

"As madame wishes."

"Miss Leighford—please; oh, fancy—'madame'!"

"As Mees Leefer wishes," repeated Marcelle, anxious to please. The girls laughed louder, and began whispering to one another. The two sisters set about quieting them, and Marcelle began mechanically to undress. She had about

half completed this operation when Jane caught sight of what she was doing.

"Oh, oh!" she shrieked. "Julia, do you see?" Then, in very broken French: "Put your clothes on this instant! Put them on right away!" The girls screamed with laughter.

"You do not like my figure, madame—Mees Leefer? You do not see—it is very, very pretty. Everyone likes it. Wait," and she hurried with her unhooking. By much explaining, however, she was at last made to understand that this was not what was wanted. After a good deal of discussion as to the pose, a standing one was selected. The only piece of wearing apparel removed was the little black hat with the red ribbon, which the Leighfords said was very vulgar. Her dress was also vulgar, and only tolerated because it was better than none at all.

"The human body," they told the girls, "is always vulgar, indecent and ugly," forgetting for the moment, it would seem, certain canons of that art of which they professed to be exponents.

The poses were of half an hour each, and in the middle of the fourth one Marcelle fainted. When she became conscious, she found the Leighfords furious. They told her that she did not know her business, and that she should not have undertaken to pose if she could not do so without fainting and breaking up their class. The girls tried to defend the little model, and a great argument and noise began—of all of which Marcelle understood not one word, but merely felt that she was being blamed wrongly. The more the girls stood up for her, the more the two old maids were against her. Next thing Marcelle knew she was being turned out. She tried to explain that she had not been paid, that she was hungry and that it was not her fault that she had fainted. No matter. She would never have done for the position anyway, they told her—she was not at all the kind of person. Out she must go. And out she went, without any food or pay, and Paris twelve long miles distant.

Marcelle went to the back door and introduced herself to the kitchen. Here she was treated with very little respect,

as such important personages as the head butler, the chef and the parlor maids could scarcely be expected to show any to a poor little model, who earned her living no one knew how. Through feelings of curiosity more than of hospitality, however, they allowed her to come in, fed her and plied her with questions about the affair which had just taken place. Marcelle soon became quite popular, especially with the chef. She sat on his knee, sang a song in his honor, and learned much from him of the Misses Leighford. He derived his information from Marie, who in turn got hers from an upstairs maid named Hortense. Marcelle made friends with Hortense, and to such effect that she was asked to share her bed for the night. Marcelle accepted with joy, and next morning what she did not know about the two "*sales Leegfors*" was not known at Le Colombier.

Although Hortense promised to write if anything of interest should happen, Marcelle could not borrow any money from her, or from the other servants, and so was forced to return to Paris as she had left it—on foot.

It was three in the afternoon when Marcelle reached the Rue l'Épée du Bois. She found Joseph writing her a letter and saw a pot boiling on the stove in the corner.

"Ah, my little Marcelle!" he cried. "What are you doing here? I'm so glad to see you. But listen to the good news! Gontran has paid me one hundred and fifty francs. One hundred and fifty, *mon enfant*—it's magnificent!"

"Oh, Joseph!" and with a wild cry of joy Marcelle was in his arms, and they were both dancing up and down in sheer delight; round and round the room they danced, and finally over to the stove to lift the cover of the pot and to smell the sausages and potatoes that were really boiling within.

"But, my dear little cabbage," panted Joseph, "you have not told me why you are here. Ah, my adorable little mouse, you are so tired. It did not go well at Le Colombier—*hein?*" Marcelle hung her head. She did not like to tell of her failure, as she thought it. She pouted,

put her pretty head on Joseph's shoulder, and stammered:

"They did not like my figure."

"Impossible! Oh, it cannot be! Oh, the imbeciles! Oh, the *bourgeoisie*! Ah, they are crazy. It is for the Gods, your figure!" As she told her story, Joseph became more and more angry with the "*Leegfors*" and more and more tender to his "precious little jewel of an adorable little bird," as he called Marcelle. He vowed vengeance, but what could he do? "To blame my little one because she faints, to turn her out with no pay, and to make her walk all the way home; that is atrocious! I will avenge you. I will make them suffer, these swine of English who have done this to my little Marcelle." Joseph kissed Marcelle again and again, as if to make up to her for her hard time, and she told him that it was all over, and that it made no difference anyhow as long as he was fond of her.

Next day came a letter from Hortense. She thought Marcelle might be glad to know that the two horrid individuals of Leegfors had been asked to leave—"thrown out of the door," she put it; and that they had left this address for any mail which might come: "Chez Mme. Beauparler, 38 Rue Jacob."

It was human to rejoice, and rejoice they did. It was resolved to have a bottle of wine for lunch, which was to cost a franc, though Marcelle thought eighteen sous would be enough. She told Joseph all she knew about the Leighfords: how old they were, how much money they had, and that they were strictly old maids. The mayor of Guildford might have been surprised had he known that his letter had been opened in the kitchen of Le Colombier, and its contents retailed into such a remote place as the Rue l'Épée du Bois. But the information was there, and Joseph listened to it, not missing a word. Suddenly he jumped to his feet. He had an idea, a rich idea! One that was going to count for something. He pondered it a few minutes just to make sure he really had it. Then he took out his money and handed it to Marcelle. She took it.

There was a long conference, at the end of which Marcelle and Joseph left

the house together. Once in the street, however, they separated.

Joseph went to a secondhand clothing store, and hired a very good frock coat and a silk hat. He also procured a red button of the Legion of Honor for six sous. This he considered a low price. As he wore a large square beard, his general effect was quite imposing. Next he went to a printer and got twelve cards stamped like this:

MONSIEUR JOSEPH JETENFOU

Professeur de Dessin. Ville de Paris.

Next day he went to 38 Rue Jacob. He had the luck to find the Misses Leighford in. Having allowed time for them to be sufficiently impressed by his high hat, his beard, his card and his red button, he opened the subject of his visit. They had chosen to leave Le Colombier. He understood it perfectly. He had come to offer his homage. The two sisters began to unbend slightly. At this school there had been no room for their personality. They were by far too great artists for that position. How could anyone imagine that it would have suited them—the two famous Misses Leighford from England! They smiled. They talked on and on about themselves.

Finally, however, Jane said: "But your own school—where you teach. We should so love to see it."

Joseph almost wept.

"Ah, my dear ladies! I beg of you not to mention it to me. It is to me a great grief. A grief that will always haunt me. You see, I love it so, this school. My pupils—they are so dear to me. Ah, how can I bear to leave them?"

"To leave them! What do you say?"

"Yes, to go away. My doctor—he has ordered it. For myself, I don't care, but to leave my pupils to someone else, who will no doubt teach them badly—how can I do it?" He began to sob. The Leighfords tried to comfort him, and said that they would never have mentioned his school had they known how he felt.

"Ah, if I could only feel that I was leaving it to someone great; to two such artists as yourselves, for example. My

life work would not then be thrown to the winds. Ah, I would be happy." Then looking up, as though just struck with a sublime idea, he said, with hope and doubt well feigned in his voice: "Can you take my school? Can you, possibly out of the goodness of your noble hearts, take my school? I beg you, I beseech you—teach my pupils!"

All sat as if thunderstruck by the thought; and the sisters exchanged rapid glances. "Only think, mesdames, what joy it would mean to me," Joseph went on, "and even to yourselves. It is a famous school, of course you know. One would say in all the papers: 'Professeur Joseph Jetenfou has been succeeded in his great school by the famous artists from England—the Misses Leighford.'"

"What a wonderful chance for us!" thought they. Joseph had similar thoughts for himself, and they all began to talk it over.

M. le Professeur needed but a small amount of money—say three thousand francs. This was all he would ask for his school; a mere nominal charge, a mere nothing. He was short of funds for the moment. At last, after a good deal of talk, it was arranged that, on the next day, a visit to the school should be paid.

"Number 45 Rue Poliveau, just back of the Jardin des Plantes," said Joseph, as he took his leave. "I'll be there to meet you, my dears, without fail. *Au revoir!*"

And there to meet them he was; and so were twenty-one of his friends, students of the "Arts Deco." A joke is a much appreciated thing in this part of Paris, and this was "*la belle blague*" in all its glory. The studio was large and full of fine plaster casts. When the Leighfords arrived, the students were all busy drawing a head of Lord Nelson. Joseph did not interrupt them, but talked quietly to the two sisters.

"Here you would have a chance to let inspiration fill that great talent of yours," he said. "Here, surrounded by these loving hearts and good workers, you could do things which would show the world what 'beauty' really means. Ah, what a privilege!"

"How well he understands us!" said Julia.

"He is a true artist," said Jane.

"Then just think what you would be doing for me," he went on. "My pupils—to you alone could I entrust their future. Ah, take it, my school—my beloved school." He leaned over Paul Magnier's shoulder to correct his work.

"Not so bad," he said, "not so bad. A little more light here on the nose—there a stronger shadow." He picked up a bit of charcoal. "A twist to the lip." He made a jab at the mouth. "Here a little more music." Joseph was more or less repeating language he had heard teachers use when he had posed for schools, and the students squirmed to keep from laughing. "Put in the feeling, my boy, put it in! Nelson was a general, you know well. Ah, if I had your youth, I'd know well how to appreciate the soul of such a man. Think of Lady Hamilton. Get the beauty into it." Then to the Leighfords: "Are they not fine pupils? You like my studio? You like my school?"

"We have decided to buy it," said Jane triumphantly. "That is, if you can really let us have it for three thousand francs."

"Ah, my ladies, I am forced to do so. The plaster casts alone are worth the price. The students each pay ten francs a month. Yes, it is a great sacrifice—immense; and yet—it is enchanting of you to take it."

"We have the money with us," said Julia, anxious not to let slip such a golden opportunity.

"I have the receipt already made out," said Joseph—for the same reason; and the exchange was made.

"My pupils," Joseph began in a shaky voice, "I am going to leave you, as you know." Groans and sighs arose from the student body. "But it is not to leave you to an untaught future; nor yet to leave you to the hands of some imbecile who only *thinks* he can paint. No! These two ladies"—the students all rose—"these two great artists from England have consented to become your instructors. Count yourselves lucky, my pupils—and allow me to present the

Misses Leighfor'." There was a great shout, and prolonged cheering and clapping.

"The tribute paid to genius by youth," said Joseph.

He wished to say farewell to his pupils alone, and it was arranged that the two sisters should begin their "labor of art" at the school on the following day. They left in great pride, amid many "*au revoirs*" and expressions of gratitude from the students. Once outside, they both sighed.

"Isn't it splendid!" said Julia.

"Yes, and yet it's only what we deserve," said Jane.

Next day, at eight o'clock, they were at the studio. Jane was reading *Le Matin*.

"Julia, there is no notice here of our having become the new teachers of Professor Jetenfou's school."

"I suppose it will be in the evening papers," said Julia.

At nine o'clock none of the pupils had arrived, and the sisters were becoming very much annoyed.

"Do they think that they can come when they like just because we are women?" snapped Julia. Just then the bell rang, and in came a little boy of perhaps six. He handed a large letter to Jane and departed without a word.

This letter ran as follows:

TO THE MISSES LEEGFOR,
Mesdames:

We, the students of Professeur Jetenfou, have the honor of addressing you to inform you that, as on July first our vacation begins, and as today is July first—we have begun our vacation. We hope to have the pleasure of seeing you on or about the first day of October, and take the great privilege of signing ourselves,

YOUR RESPECTFUL AND DEVOTED PUPILS

This was followed by twenty-one signatures. Jane and Julia were too dazed to know what to say or do.

"The rascals!"

"The good-for-nothings!"

"What a way to treat us! Why couldn't they have said so yesterday? What can we do all summer?"

"At this rate, we don't begin making money till the fall. Why, it's outrageous!"

The doorbell rang and in came a young man. He presented Julia with a bill.

"For the casts," he said. "If it is not immediately paid, I am to begin to take them away." (Marcelle had left these instructions when she had hired them at Simonette's the day before.)

"It's some kind of a hoax."

"It's a cheat!" Jane's voice wavered. "It's a trick of some kind, I begin to think!" The door had been left open and now a youngish woman stepped in. She handed Jane an envelope. It was a bill for the first three months' rent of a year's lease of the studio. It was made out in their name and payable in advance, term beginning July first. (Marcelle had so directed the *gérant* from whom she had rented it.)

The Leighfords gasped. It was ter-

rific. It was the most outrageous cheat ever dreamed of. They were just becoming awake to the enormity of the affair when the postman entered the studio. He seemed surprised to see them.

"The Misses Leeghfor'?" he asked slowly, reading the name on a letter. They snatched it. It was from Fontainebleau. In it was a picture of Joseph and Marcelle arm in arm, across the bottom of which was written, very small, in a girl's handwriting:

DEAR MISSES LEEFORS:

You are so kind-hearted, we are sure you will be pleased to know how happy we are here at Fontainebleau, spending your 3,000 francs. We feel sure you will be a great success teaching how ugly the human body can be—but you shouldn't think everybody is the same. By the way—the third class fare from Paris to Guildford is 27 frs. 30.



BOOKS

By Grace Fallow Norton

I HAVE read in my beautiful books all day,
And dwelt all day in a dream.
It was wonderful, fair, but too far away,
So I take down my cloak from the beam,

For I will be walking the village street,
To learn how the schoolmistress fares,
To get from the farmer the price of his wheat
And talk of our hopes and cares.

I will go to the smithy and on to the store—
The smith is setting a shoe!
I wish, if I stood a while by the door,
I might pay with a rhyme or two.

"And is this young Richard? Well, gourds will grow!"
"Good neighbor, how is your sick wife?"
Oh, I read in my books all day, but now
I would read in the book of life.

IN THE HIGHER COURT

By Atkinson Kimball

"ALL this excitement about the increase of divorce is ridiculous," said Chalmers, looking argumentatively at the Doctor and me across a small dining table on the piazza of the Mere and Meadow Club. "The matter is simple enough: if a married couple aren't happy together, they ought to get divorced."

"It would be simple enough," Dr. Cameron said thoughtfully, "if human nature were as simple as your remedy is. I believe," he added, "that two persons who don't love each other shouldn't live together as man and wife."

"That's what I said!" Chalmers cried.

"You said, if they weren't happy together—"

"Well, it's the same thing."

"I wish it were."

"Chalmers thinks marriage is one grand sweet song," I said.

"Of course married folks have their disagreements and bickerings. What I mean is downright quarreling and misery. A man and a woman who lead such a dog's life as that can't love each other."

"Love is always achieving the impossible." The Doctor looked absently at the cigar he held in the flexible fingers of his large hand.

"Give us an example," demanded Chalmers.

"Don't let Chalmers violate your professional honor, Doctor. He'd pry into any privacy. He's worse than a yellow journal."

"The sweetest specimens in the yellows are furnished by you lawyers," Chalmers got back at me.

"The case I have in mind," the Doc-

tor said, "hadn't any privacy to pry into. No outsider could tell anything worse about them than they told about each other, or, at any rate, worse than Mrs. Sheldon told about her husband."

"Not Mrs. Jared A.?" I asked.

The Doctor nodded.

"Oh, Lord! If those Sheldons are your case in point! Do you mean to tell me *they* loved each other?"

"Love has various manifestations."

"Well, the Sheldon manifestation was a pretty good imitation of devouring hate. I saw it working at close range. She came to me to get her divorce."

"But she didn't get it." The Doctor's blue eyes twinkled.

"Not because she couldn't. For some reason or other, she dropped the case. I never found out why."

"I happen to know why she didn't get the divorce. Ever meet the Sheldons, Chalmers?"

Chalmers settled comfortably back in his chair and signaled the waiter.

"Never heard of them. Fire away. What will you have?"

We smoked in silence until the waiter returned. The trees threw lengthening shadows across the lawn; the level yellow radiance of the low-hanging sun crept in under the piazza roof; a cat-boat, with its rounded mellow sail, swept in toward the land. One felt that he was far from the hurly-burly of New York, and that there stretched before him an evening of fragrant summer dusk and warm human companionship.

"I became acquainted with the Sheldons," the Doctor began, "in the way I have become acquainted with a good many interesting characters. I was called in a case of emergency because I

happened to be the nearest physician. On a day even hotter than this has been, I was sitting in my office waiting for calls—I spent most of my time waiting for calls in those days—when a ring at my door gave me a thrill of pleasurable excitement; but I wasn't a quarter as excited as the maid servant who was ushered into my office. I'm not sure that her emotion wasn't pleasurable also, for it's human nature to enjoy accidents to others if they aren't too serious. Her mistress, Mrs. Sheldon, had met with an accident.

"The Sheldons lived on the same block. As soon as the door closed behind me, I knew that Mrs. Sheldon was a perfect housekeeper. Only a perfect housekeeper could make a house as cool on a hot day as her house was. She managed, somehow, to draw into it, in the early morning, the sparkling freshness of the dawn, and conserve it all through the day."

Chalmers moved impatiently in his chair. "What had happened to the woman?" he asked.

Again the Doctor's eyes twinkled. He turned to me.

"Don't you think that Mrs. Sheldon was an attractive woman?"

"Lord, no!"

"Perhaps I think so because first impressions are lasting, and she looked charming that hot afternoon, propped up on a sofa in her bedroom, looking as cool as the house felt. The green shutters were bowed to; there was a smell of lavender water in the air; she wore a white dressing sack, and on her small feet she had red Turkish slippers.

"What is the trouble, Mrs. Sheldon?" I asked.

"She stared at me hard for an instant, too nervous to speak. With the help of the maid, she unfastened her dressing sack and slipped it off. One of her shoulders was swollen and covered with the reddish spot of a recent bruise.

"How did this happen?" I turned to the servant.

"The girl looked at her mistress as if she didn't know what to say. Mrs. Sheldon pointed to a brass fire screen that stood before the fireplace.

"I fell against that," she said, and then, suddenly, she went off into one of those gales of hysteria that seem to rack women to pieces, but which really do them good. She kept repeating: 'My husband did it! He struck me! He knocked me down!'

"Well, after that I didn't want to ask any further questions. I gave her a sedative and bandaged her shoulder. The hurt wasn't serious but her nerves were in bad shape.

"Of course I knew that it takes two to make a quarrel, and I surmised that Mrs. Sheldon had dramatized a push into a knockdown blow, but I felt a strong desire to give Sheldon a piece of my mind. I told the maid that I would find my way out alone, and as I fumbled at the front door in the darkened hall a door at the back of the passage opened softly. A man's voice asked whether I were the doctor and would I come there a minute. The shutters were drawn in, the room clouded with tobacco smoke.

"I'm Jared A. Sheldon," he said. 'Have a drink, Doctor?'

"I refused. He poured one for himself from a decanter on the table, but I saw that his offense toward his wife hadn't the palliation of alcohol.

"How did you find Mrs. Sheldon, Doctor?"

"Pretty badly bruised."

"He made an embarrassed sort of sound in his throat, and going to one of the windows, raised the screen and threw back the shutters.

"I've heard that accidents never come singly," he said, 'and they surely don't. Look here.' He turned the side of his face toward the light. From temple to chin swept the lines of ugly scratches. 'I did it on that confounded wire screen. Went to open the shutters, didn't notice the screen cloth was torn, and raked my chin on it.'

"The screen cloth *was* torn, but he couldn't have hurt himself as he said he had, and he knew I knew he couldn't.

"I can't go out looking like this. I want you to fix me up."

"While I fixed him up, I was wishing that I could heal that other wound that went so much deeper, but I couldn't

patch up a quarrel when I didn't know what it was about; and in a case like this, I couldn't ask what it was about. When I got up to go, Sheldon followed me into the hall.

"Was my wife suffering much?" he asked.

"He was ten years older than I, but he treated me—the way people often treat physicians—as though the seniority were on my side. Then, too, there was something essentially boyish about him. He was ashamed, and he was ashamed to show his shame, and I suddenly found the courage to say: 'I can't relieve her suffering. *You* can. Go upstairs as soon as I leave, and tell her you are sorry.'

"I'll be hanged if I will!" he blustered. "She began it."

"Well, you ended it."

"His face went red as a flag."

"She never in her life said she was sorry. She'd die first. Anyway, I don't know what to say I'm sorry *for*. I don't know what we were quarreling about."

"I stared at Sheldon in amazement."

"It's this way, Doctor," he said, as if he were describing the symptoms of a disease: "we've just formed the habit of disagreeing. Something—nothing—will start us off, and before we end we've forgotten what started us. She'll never own she's in the wrong. She's the most stubborn person I ever saw. Now I'm not stubborn. I can be led, but I won't be driven."

"His red mustache bristled with the squaring of his jaw. I hesitated, with the knob of the door in my hand."

"Have you any children?" I asked.

"None living. We had a little girl. She died three years ago."

"The water came into his eyes."

"You are very fond of children?"

"I was of *her*."

"It must have been a great blow to your wife," I persisted.

"It almost killed her. Often, even yet, I wake up in the night and hear her crying for Emmie. I guess she'll never get over it."

"I held out my hand in farewell."

"Go upstairs, put your arms around

your wife and tell her you love her. I prescribe it."

"He smiled rather sheepishly and shook his head, but I knew that he would do it."

"When I rang their bell late the next afternoon, Mrs. Sheldon herself opened the door, and almost at the same moment her husband came up the steps with a large florist's box under his arm. The way she looked at him when she thanked him for the flowers made me feel that my presence was a superfluity. I tried to get myself off, but Sheldon wouldn't let me go. He seemed to feel that they owed their reconciliation to me, and before I knew it I had promised to stay to dinner. He said that when they wanted to have a particularly good time, Mrs. Sheldon let both the maids go out while she got dinner, and this was one of the times. He said he wished the maids would go out every day, for his wife was the best cook in the world. She blushed like a girl at his praise."

"We had dinner at a little table in the back yard. The fence and the house were so covered with vines and banked with shrubs that it was like dining at the bottom of a green mossy well. Above us was a high, clear rectangle of sky, brightened by an invisible sunset. Sheldon said I must stay until the flowers of the moonvine opened. This vine clambered to the roof of the house, and had long twisted buds that suddenly, while we sat looking at them, unfolded flat white blossoms that gleamed in the dusk with a mothlike beauty. Sheldon moved his chair nearer his wife's, and I knew that he had found her hand under the tablecloth."

"Yet that was the couple—" I said.

"That was the couple, and that's the pity of it."

"Well, if they could be so happy," Chalmers said indignantly, "why the deuce weren't they always happy?"

"And," I said, "if they could be so unhappy, why the deuce weren't they always unhappy?"

"What happened next?" Chalmers asked, ignoring me.

"The next thing happened to me,"

said the Doctor. "I bought out a practice further uptown. It was about a year after that I received a note from Mrs. Sheldon asking me to come and see her. She wrote that she had left her husband and was suing for a divorce. I found her in a boarding house in Brooklyn."

"I envy you the interview, Doctor," I said. "I'll wager she gave you even more details than she gave me."

"Well, perhaps. I liked Sheldon, and I did wish she could have left a white spot on him somewhere, but her one thought was of the injury she had suffered; her one desire was to make him suffer. It made matters worse that the blow had fallen during one of their periods of peace, through the agency of an anonymous letter."

"Poor woman!" growled Chalmers. And I was moved to say: "I'll give her the credit of not wanting alimony."

"She wouldn't touch a cent of her husband's. Her mother had left her a little money. She was living on that in a back room of one of those boarding houses that have halls redolent of immemorial meals and upholstery shiny from immemorial contacts. Her window looked out on an area of cracked cement filled with barrels of rubbish. In one corner was a dying rubber plant. I remember the dying rubber plant worried Mrs. Sheldon—she had been so fond of her own green back yard. I kept wondering why she had sent for me to listen to her forlorn story. Finally she enlightened me.

"What she told me sent me posthaste to her husband. I found him in the back parlor where I had first met him. Already the house showed the lack of a woman's loving care; and Sheldon himself looked like a small boy whose mother was away from home. At the mention of his wife's name he treated me to an exhibition of his temper. He jumped to the conclusion that I had come in an attempt to heal the rupture, and he swore at his wife and he swore at me with, somehow, the effect of swearing at himself. He said nothing could persuade him to live with his wife again. The sooner they were divorced the better.

"When I got a chance, I gave him my news. He turned white under his two days' growth of beard and dropped into the nearest chair, swearing gently in a tone of astonishment and awe.

"Why didn't she tell me?" he kept repeating.

"He seemed to forget the estrangement from his wife, and to think only of the fact that he was to become a father again. He made me sit down while he told me all about Emmie. His new expectations rendered these reminiscences no longer painful but only happy promises for the future. He trotted up and down before me, a large cigar alternately glowing between his lips and dropping its ash upon the carpet. Suddenly he paused, transfixing me slantwise with his red-brown eyes.

"She might be a boy, mightn't it?" he asked.

"When he got around to talking about a reconciliation with his wife, he was ready to make any atonement she might exact. He was willing to do anything to get her to come back to her own home where he could take care of her. He didn't view his dereliction as an enormity except as it affected his wife. He said that his wife was the only woman he had ever loved or ever could love. He seemed to think this the only point of importance, and that it ought to weigh as heavily with her as it did with him. He protested that their quarrels had created such an atmosphere that you couldn't much blame a man if he tried to get away from it.

"But Mrs. Sheldon would listen to no argument in his favor, though she listened eagerly to all I told her of his joy in his coming fatherhood. His parental anticipations were meat and drink to her, almost the only meat and drink I could get her to swallow. At first I misunderstood the source of her eagerness, and then I saw that it sprang from the fact that she recognized in her unborn child a powerful instrument for torturing its father. The child was to be hers entirely. Her husband should never live with it, never touch it, never even see it."

"Poor man!" sighed Chalmers.

"Yes," assented the Doctor. "Poor man, and poor woman! She was wretchedly unhappy, all the more so that her heart was full of malice. She was sick, alone, deprived of the house she had loved with the passion of a born housewife. If her imagination comforted her with dreams of the future with her child, I saw no evidence of it. Apparently she had no friends in New York. It's surprising how many persons there are in New York who have no friends.

"One day, when I called, I found her much perturbed. The landlady had asked her to leave before the birth of her child. Boarders liked a birth in a boarding house as little as they liked a death. She had suggested that Mrs. Sheldon go to a hospital, but Mrs. Sheldon belonged to the generation that believed that only the pariahs of the earth were born in hospitals.

"The problem was solved by Jared A. The landlady, for a generous consideration, consented to let Mrs. Sheldon remain. The front room was taken for her, and a nurse was installed in her old room. Of course I didn't dare tell Mrs. Sheldon that her husband had smoothed her path. She thought I had talked the landlady over, and she took the nurse and the extra room as, somehow, inherent in my professional services to her.

"I had promised to let Sheldon know when the birth was imminent, and one night in March I telephoned to him.

"Mrs. Sheldon had a siege of it, which meant a siege for me, too; and now and then during the night I got away from my ordeal by going out on the front steps. In Mrs. Sheldon's ordeal there were no such breathing spaces. The first time I went out I noticed a man skulking in the shadow of the house opposite. It was Sheldon.

"During the long hours of his vigil the iron of remorse must have entered Jared A.'s soul. He wouldn't come into the boarding house and wait, and he wouldn't go home. 'Home!' he cried. 'It's hell!' He added: 'If anything should happen, and she should ask for

me, I want to be on hand.' I suppose that it was through experiences analogous to this that the sacredness of the family tie became part of the race consciousness.

"Whenever I appeared on the steps he came up to me, too anxious to ask for the report he feared. I remember he told me that about midnight an Irish policeman had spoken to him; but when he learned the cause of Sheldon's suspicious actions he was very sympathetic. He said that he had been just that nervous with his first, but assured Sheldon that now, on such occasions, he wasn't nervous at all.

"Milk wagons were rattling through the streets when at last I went out to Sheldon with the news. He had stopped his interminable walking. He was waiting at the foot of the steps. He looked bedraggled and miserable.

"'You have a son,' I said, in answer to the mute question in his heavy eye.

"'And my wife?'

"'She's all right.'

"He bounded up the steps and shook my hand like a pump handle. Then he fumbled for something in his breast pocket, and drew forth a couple of perfectos.

"'I bought these especially for the celebration.'

"This was amusing in view of the fact that all night I hadn't seen him without a cigar between his lips. But I needed mine.

"'A boy?'

"'A boy. His hair is as red as yours and his face is a good deal redder.'

"'I'd give five dollars to have a look at him!'

"I hesitated, and then I said: 'Come in this afternoon and have a look.'

"'Will my wife—'

"'No, she won't. Your wife hasn't had a change of heart, but the baby is yours as much as hers. I'll have him in the nurse's room this afternoon at three o'clock. Your wife needn't know anything about it.'

"As prompt as a lover at a tryst, Sheldon presented himself at the door of the nurse's room. Like a lover, too, he was arrayed in purple and fine linen

—a flower in his buttonhole, perfume on his mustache. He evidently wanted to make a good first impression on his son. But the son wasn't there to be impressed. Mrs. Sheldon, with the stubborn caprice of an invalid, wouldn't allow the baby to be taken from her.

"If Mr. Sheldon can wait," said the nurse, "I will try again."

"She was a young nurse, with an air of detached superiority not uncommon in young nurses. Whether her manner irritated Sheldon, or whether his impatience got the better of him, he broke out, 'I can't wait!' and quickly crossing the hall to his wife's door, he flung it open. I followed, prepared for the deluge. Even if Mrs. Sheldon was weak, she wasn't inarticulate.

"His impatience carried him well into the room. At the bed he paused and grasped the footboard.

"His wife lay flat on her back, one arm cradling the baby against her side. An intensity of maternal possession was expressed in her frail, rigid figure, and I knew that what I had supposed her caprice had been her intuition. She felt that her husband was in the house. She believed in some crazy way that he had come to take her baby from her. She looked at him with the indomitable will of the female in defense of its young; and Sheldon looked back at her, slantwise, his head lowered like a bull at bay. Involuntarily, she clutched the baby closer to her side. It gave a pathetic little squeak of pain, and she vehemently mothered it. Sheldon quickly glanced from her to his child. His hands

loosened on the footboard. The muscles of his face relaxed. With a fatuous parental pride, he looked at the ridiculous little replica of himself. Irrelevantly, sheepishly, with a self-conscious need of breaking the silence, he asked the question one always asks of a new mother:

"What are you going to name it?"

"At his tone, his wife looked up.

"What passed between them, of course, I never knew; but I believe there was a mutual recognition that their love, which had so often worn the guise of hate, which had been dishonored by one and disgraced by both, was a bond that could never be broken by either of them.

"I'm going to name him Jared A., Junior," she snapped."

The Doctor paused with an air of finality.

"Is that *all*?" Chalmers' inflection made his disapproval almost belligerent.

"Why, yes, I believe it is," laughed the Doctor.

"Chalmers likes all stories to end with, 'and they lived happy forever after.'"

"In this case," said the Doctor, "so far as I know, they did."

Chalmers looked at me triumphantly.

The pleasant chill of the summer evening was in the air, making the heat of the day as phantasmal as pain that is past. Our bright balcony seemed afloat in the velvety darkness. Far out on the bay an excursion steamer drew the pattern of its myriad lights against the sky like a constellation.



ANNA—What does your soldier sweetheart say when he calls?
BELLA—"To arms!"



MILLENNIUM—The time when the number of "found" advertisements in the newspapers will exceed those in the "lost" column.

THE SMART SET FOR SEPTEMBER

SOME cynic once said that most people's vacations were spent reading magazines, fighting mosquitoes and—wishing they were back home again.

If this cynic is right, the one redeeming feature of a vacation is the magazines. Therefore it is of the utmost importance to get into your hands the right magazines.

THE SMART SET is *the* vacation magazine, and the September number, prepared especially for vacation readers, will contain a large amount of fiction of an unusual and striking nature. It is designed solely for entertainment. Neither highbrow nor ultra, its stories and sketches are bright, clever, piquant and full of sparkle and snap.

A NOVELETTE BY ALICIA RAMSEY

This writer's name alone assures a story above the average. This novelette, "The Peacemaker," is really an extraordinary magazine feature; its plot is novel, and a situation is worked out that will baffle the reader with its seeming impossibility of solution. It concerns an ancient and proud house and a glorious family row. The story is tense and bristles with piled-up complications; the dénouement is sudden and swift. "The Peacemaker" is one of the best and most unusual in the long list of striking novelettes THE SMART SET has published in recent years.

"A CRYING SHAME"—A GREAT STORY ON DIVORCE

A remarkable story by William Hamilton Osborne will appear in this number. He has appropriately named it, for it depicts the conflict of the divorce laws by which a couple may be legally married in one State and not in another. This is a great moving story of modern conditions that will strike home to every household.

CAN WOMEN TAKE CARE OF MONEY?

Frederic Taber Cooper's story, "Constitutionally Unfitted," will appeal to wives—and to husbands as well, for there's a lesson in it for them. This is a sprightly tale of a woman whose husband considered her unfitted to take care of money—and how she fooled him. A really ingenious and out-of-the-ordinary story.

W. L. GEORGE ON THE "WOMAN PROBLEM"

Here arises a man to plead the cause of the English window smashers! W. L. George, whose fame as a novelist is in danger of being eclipsed by his reputation as a champion of feminism, contributes an essay to this issue on "Unmarried Daughters." It puts the "woman problem" in England and America in a new light. He hauls the "furies" before the bar of justice—and acquits them! There are no statistics nor long, boring arguments; Mr. George has treated the subject in a light, entertaining style, touched with flashes of human and witty comment. His article will appeal strongly to the suffragists—and even the stiff-necked male "oppressors" and the "antis" will find in it enjoyable reading.

We have in preparation also for a following issue an article on the woman question by Arthur Stringer, who will treat the subject from an entirely different angle. Mr. Stringer's views on the subject are well known; his essay on "Barbarous Woman," which appeared in this magazine a year or so ago, will be recalled for the sensation it caused.

A NEW KIND OF NEWSPAPER STORY

Freeman Tilden, whose series of satires has been a feature of recent issues, departs slightly from his usual vein in this number, and contributes a story of newspaper life intended as an antidote to the numerous tales in which reporters are surrounded by the glamour of romance. "People Want Pictures" is the title of the story, which depicts feelingly some of the hard, sordid conditions of newspaper work.

HERE'S A FREE TICKET TO THE LONDON THEATERS

George Jean Nathan, whose dramatic reviews have for six years delighted readers of THE SMART SET with their caustic wit and pointed thrusts, will next month devote his department to a review of all the big plays now running in London. Mr. Nathan has at times held the London producers to be the more discriminating and the more progressive of the two English-speaking dramatic producing worlds, but on his recent London trip he has visited a newly rendered verdict upon the offerings currently being presented there. A number of these plays will be presented in this country next winter; readers will here get advance information regarding them. Also some of Mr. Nathan's characteristic philosophies on the theater in general.

AN UNUSUAL ONE-ACT PLAY

A one-act play by Roland Oliver, called "Little Face," will be a delightful feature. Its action is laid in the days of the cave men, and is a clever take-off of some present-day foibles. This play is slated for early production at the famous Princess Theater in New York.

Mr. Mencken's usual keen critique on recent books will appear, together with stories by Viola Burhans, Dorothy H. Brodhead, Owen Oliver, Beulah Marie Dix and Melville Chater.

Order now of your Newsdealer the September SMART SET—then you will be sure to get it.

WE WE

By George Jean Nathan

B *BEING a pocket manual of conversation (English-French) with recognized pronunciation, and containing just and only such words and phrases as the average American needs and uses during the day in Paris.*

1. MORNING

VOCABULARY	VOCABULAIRE	PRONUNCIATION
Coffee (with milk) and rolls.	Du café au lait et des petits pains.	Dew coffee oh late et days petty pains.
The check.	L'addition.	Ladditziyawn.
How much?	Combien?	Come-bean?
Overcharge!	La survente!	La servant!
It's a shame!	C'est dommage!	Kest dumb-age!
I don't pay!	Je ne paye pas!	Jay no pay pass!
You think Americans are easy marks.	Vous croyez que les Américains sont des belles poires.	Vuz croyz cue lays Americans sont days bells pores.
Where is the headwaiter?	Où est le premier garçon?	Oo est lay primer garson?
Extortion!	L'extorsion!	Lee extortion!
Audacity!	L'audace!	Lowdace!
What impudence!	Quel effronterie!	Kwel effrontry!
A crime!	Un crime!	Yune cree-um!
Robbers!	Les voleurs!	Lays velours!
Call a policeman!	Appelez un gendarme!	Apple-ease yune cop!
One franc!!	Un franc!!	Yune frank!!
A shame!	L'infamie!	Linfame!
Insolence!	L'insolence!	Linsolance!
Damned frog-eating Frenchmen!	Les sacrés mangeurs de grenouilles français!	Lays sackers mangers dee grenoolies frankays!

2. NOON

The bill of fare.	La carte (du jour).	La card (dee jury).
Roast beef and potatoes.	Un rosbif aux pommes de terre.	Yune roastbif oh poms dee tear.
A toothpick.	Un cure-dent.	Yune curedent.
The check.	L'addition.	Ladditziyawn.
Great Scott!	Bon Scott!	Bonnie Scot!
You must take Americans for boobs!	Vous croyez que les Américains sont des fous!	Vuz croyz cue lays Americans sont days simps!

VOCABULARY	VOCABULAIRE	PRONUNCIATION
A dirty shame! Where's the manager?	L'infamie vilaine! Où est le maître d'hôtel?	Linfame verlain! Oo est lay mater dee hotel?
Two francs!	Deux francs!	Deuce franks!
What!	Quoi!	Quoit!
Incredible!	C'est incroyable!	Kest incroybul!
It's awful!	C'est affreux!	Kest affrooz!
You can go chase yourself!	Chasse-toi!	Chase toy!
Why, in Chicago—	Mais à Chicago—	May uh Shicawgo—

3. AFTERNOON

So this is the Pré Catelan!	Eh, bien! Le Pré Catelan!	E bean! Lee Pree Cattle-land!
It's not up to Elitch's Gardens.	Ce n'est pas si bon que les jardins d'Elitch.	Key nest pass so bon cue lays jardins dee Elitch.
Waiter, a Bronx.	Garçon, un apéritif Bronx.	Garson, yune aperteef Bronx.
Gee, that's a peach of a chicken in the green hat!	Mon Dieu! Quelle jolie poulette au chapeau vert!	Mon doo! Kwel jolly pu-lay aw shapyou vert!
Waiter, my check.	Garçon, l'addition.	Garson, my ladditziyawn.
What! Fifty centimes?	Quoi! Cinquante centimes?	Quoit! Sinkant sentimes?
Do you think us Americans are rubes?	Croyez-vous que nous Américains sont des fermiers?	Croyz vuz cue news Americans sont days fermeers?
Too much!	Trop!	Trop!
I can't consent to it!	Je ne puis y consentir!	Jay nee pewis why con-senter!
An awful overcharge!	Une survente terrible!	Uni servant terrible!
Damned French swindlers!	Les Français sont des escrocs damnables!	Lays Frankays sont days escrocks damnable!

4. EVENING

Hey there! Taxi!	Hé! Arrêtez! Taxi!	Either whistle or wave arms.
Café de la Paix!	Café de la Paix!	Caif della Pays!
How much, driver?	Combien, chauffeur?	Come-bean, showfer?
Thirty centimes!	Trente centimes!	Trenton sentimes!
Cursed crook!	Maudit voleur!	Maude velour!
It's an absolute imposition!	C'est une véritable exploitation!	Kest uni veritable exploi-tation!
Change this five-franc piece.	Changez cette pièce de cinq francs.	Changey settee piece dee sink franks.
Well, anyway, I got the right change.	(Merely thought, never verbalized.)	Counterfeit.
Waiter, bring me some roast beef and potatoes.	Garçon, apportez moi un rosbif aux pommes de terre.	Garson, apporpty moey yune roastbif oh poms dee tear.
A toothpick.	Un cure-dent.	Yune curedent.
My check!	L'addition.	My ladditziyawn.
Two francs!	Deux francs!	Deuce franks!

VOCABULARY	VOCABULAIRE	PRONUNCIATION
H—1!	L'Enfer!	Loafer!
You take us Americans for hayseeds.	Vous croyez que nous Américains sont des graines du foin.	Vuz croyz cue news Ameri- cans sont days grains dew fun.
Two francs! I'm sore!	Deux francs! Jem'enrage!	Deuce franks! Jay menny- rage!
Here is your money and— <i>good night!</i>	Voici votre argent et—bon soir!!	Voce vote argent et— <i>bon</i> <i>sore!</i>

5. NIGHT

Maxim's at last!	Enfin, Maxim's!	Whoop-ee!
Ah, there, kiddo!	Eh, bébé!	E baby!
Sure, I'll buy you wine.	Certainement, j'achèterai du champagne.	Certainment, joshetarie dew wine.
I love you.	Je vous aime.	Jay vuz aimey.
Oh, you're kidding.	Vous me taquinez.	Vuz me tack-knees.
More wine? Sure, dearie!	Plus de champagne? Cer- tainement, ma chérie!	Plus dee wine? Certain- ment, my cherry!

6. TWO A. M.

Stung!	Une piqûre!	Uni picker!
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7. BACK HOME: A MONTH LATER

Honestly, Mary, I was true to you.	Vraiment, Marie, je vous fus fidèle.	Of course.
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FOOTNOTE.

Inasmuch as the only persons in all Paris today who do not try to speak English are the Americans, it is advisable for the Americans in Paris to try speaking English and reserve their French for the United States where the only persons today who do not try to speak French are the Frenchmen.



THE ARTIST

By Maude Ralston

NO marble, brush nor any paint
The artist knew. To make his saint
He wielded pain—'twas all he had;
He struggled with his moods when sad
To mould them clear and bright and glad,
And body forth, free from alloy,
The very heart and soul of joy.

A NEW YORK SKYSCRAPER

By Madison Cawein

ENORMOUSLY it lifts
Its tower against the splendor of the west;
Like some bright dream that drifts
Before the mind, and, at the will's behest—
Enchantment-based, gigantic steel and stone—
Is given permanence;
A concrete fact,
Complete, alone,
Glorious, immense,
Such as no nation here on earth has known:
Epitomizing all
That is American, that stands for youth
And strength and truth;
That's individual
And beautiful and free,
Resistless strength and tireless energy.

Even as a cataract,
Its superb fact
Suggests vast forces Nature builds with—Joy
And Power and Thought,
She to her aid has brought
For eons past, will bring for eons yet to be,
Shaping the world to her desire. The three
Her counsellors constantly—
Her architects, through whom her dreams come true;
Her workmen, bringing forth,
With toil that shall not cease,
Mountains and plains and seas,
That make the earth
The glory that it is;
And, one with these,
Such works of man as this,
This building, towering into the blue,
The beacon, round which, like an ocean wide,
Circles and flows the restless human tide.



MR. TIFF (*sarcastically*)—It seems to me I'm always wrong.
MR. TIFF—Well, you're right for once.

THE BORDER

By Henry C. Rowland

"IT is all very interesting," said Jones, "but a bit unsatisfying." "The patients in my clinic of psycho-therapy do not find it so," answered Dr. Bayre. He turned to me. "You have followed some of my cases. Do you think that the wife of the *ouvrier* has found it unsatisfying? Formerly she received a beating, on an average, once a month, when her husband was drunk. Now he does not drink, and she is no longer beaten. There are many similar cases which I have seen." He lit a cigarette and frowned.

"I beg your pardon, Doctor," said Jones. "I don't mean to detract from the practical value of your science. I was speaking generally of the usual manifestations of spiritism: levitation and telepathy and messages from the dead and all the rest. In spite of the claims of mediums, I notice that none of them has taken up Le Bon's challenge in the *Matin* to shift a solid weight from one table to another before witnesses. And they must need the money, too."

"There are reasons. Also there are charlatans. Yet again, people needing money who could shift weights at will and without machinery would not be professional mediums. They would engage in the business of furniture moving."

"But can't you offer this Philistine something concrete from your own experience, Doctor?" asked I.

"What is the use? He would not believe."

Jones flushed. "I beg your pardon, Doctor. Your word is far more convincing than my doubts."

The psychologist turned to him with a smile.

"That is nicely put." His fine, broad-

browed, highly intellectual face grew thoughtful. "Yes," he said, "I will show you something. I do not as a rule waste time convincing skeptics, but to you I feel that I owe something because I have so much enjoyed your tales. Excuse me for a moment."

He flicked his cigarette into the fire, rose lightly to his feet and left the room, to return a moment later with some leaves of paper held together in clips, and a newspaper.

"This is quite a long story, and as it proceeds you will recognize the characters and the events. But please do not interrupt—not even by an exclamation of surprise."

He laid the papers upon the table at his side, leaned back in his chair and brought the tips of his fingers together.

"One night," said he, "I felt myself to be unduly sensitive. As I have remarked before, my personal faculty lies almost wholly in producing or inducing what are known as mediumistic qualities in others. Myself, I have had very little of what is known as 'occult experience.' Take, for instance, the practice of crystal gazing; only twice have I ever seen anything in a crystal globe, although I have tried repeatedly.

"This night, as I have said, I felt myself to be highly sensitive, and it occurred to me to look into the ball, so I went into my study and turned down the lights and set myself to gaze. I do not know just how long I had been looking, when suddenly I observed the phenomenon so often described to me by my patients and others but seen for the first time with my own eyes. The crystal clouded, became milky and opaque, then cleared, and I found my-

self looking into the face of a man. He was a handsome fellow, of somewhat over thirty, thoroughbred in type. The whole face was well known to me; I recognized it as one that I had frequently seen, and presently I recalled it as belonging to a gentleman whom I had often met when riding in the Bois.

"But what impressed me the most was the expression of earnest, almost agonized entreaty. The eyes looked straight into mine with an appeal which haunted me. However, knowing the irrelevance of pictures seen in this way, I tried to put the vision out of my mind and to congratulate myself that my efforts had finally met with success.

"Two nights later, I looked into the globe again, when to my amazement the same face appeared almost instantly; this time the expression of entreaty, the mute and agonized appeal, was even more intense, and I saw the lips move as if imploring aid. Then the picture vanished, leaving me shocked and startled.

"This," I said to myself, "is more than coincidence." I went to my telephone and called up a person with whom I had several times conducted experiments, and who was possessed of considerable mediumistic faculty. I requested her to come to my office at once.

"When she arrived I told what had occurred, and she agreed that it was undoubtedly an effort to communicate on the part of some entity who was in trouble. I suggested hypnotism, but she proposed that we first attempt communication by means of what is known as automatic writing.

"Before she had been sitting five minutes with the writing block on her knee, the pencil began to move. At the end of perhaps ten minutes I looked over her shoulder and found, to my disgust, the usual jumble of vulgar and meaningless sentences which is so often the result of this method of communication. Much disappointed, I put a stop to the writing, and asking her to wait, I went into my study and wrote a short note to another acquaintance with whom I have had many discussions on these matters. The note I gave to my servant, with

instructions to jump into a motor cab and deliver it at once, bringing the gentleman back with him if possible. About twenty minutes later he arrived, when I explained the whole coincidence.

"Yes," said he, "somebody is undoubtedly trying to communicate with you, but is unable to gain access to your medium. Perhaps we may be able to remedy that."

"Then go ahead and do so," said I. "We are quite at your command."

"He went ahead then with a formulary which he had learned from his Oriental studies in occultism and Hindoo magic, and which I had always regarded as the mystic rubbish with which time and tradition have interlarded scientific truth. First he requested that I sit in the middle of the room facing my medium and at a distance of about three feet. Then he closed the doors and windows, and taking the fire shovel, proceeded to roast incense until we were nearly choked by the fumes. Thereafter, taking an ebony wand from his inner pocket, he drew a circle about us, and having ascertained the points of the compass, drew pentagrams at the four cardinal ones, accompanying each design with an invocation. All of this consumed some time, during which I sat there, half interested, half ashamed and wholly skeptical.

"This formula," he remarked when he had finished, "is one used by the Hindoos to keep out undesired entities when it is wished to communicate with some particular one. Now, Doctor, please invoke the presence of the person with whom you want to communicate, and request that he avail himself of the services of your medium."

"Accordingly I did so. 'Will the entity whose face appeared to me in the crystal sphere please to come within the circle,' said I, 'and transmit his message through the pencil in the hands of the medium!'

"Several minutes passed without result; then suddenly the pencil began to move with great rapidity and apparent definite purpose. The sheets which I have here, consist of a copy of the

original, made by myself for reasons which I will presently relate. I will now read them. The narrative began abruptly, as you will see, and it was not until I had read for some length that I was able to recall certain instances."

Dr. Bayre adjusted his spectacles, and picking up the sheaf of pages read as follows:

"... All that her kindness did for me remained imprinted upon a brain which she supposed to be stupefied from violence. For although my body was completely paralyzed for several days, my mind was active throughout—abnormally so, I think, as the impressions which remained were strong and detailed as though of a series of pictures I had painted.

"Unlike my friend De Neuville and the *mécanicien*, I preserved the clearest recollection of the details of the accident itself. We were making over a hundred kilometres an hour, I shame to say, upon a greasy road, when that *char-à-banc* full of children shot out of the gate and across the track. At such a moment our actions are governed by some higher intelligence and we need take no credit for them to ourselves. A strength not of my body twisted the wheel in my hands and flung the big car over the edge of the bank. Why not? A nameless aristocrat, a *mécanicien* and a mediocre painter! What did their lives weigh against those of a wagonload of children?

"The crash itself is vague, but I remember the dreamlike journey on the swaying stretcher across the meadow, and down the cool, shady lane. It was here that De Neuville spread a scarf over my face, but it slipped off when they set me down in the antechamber of the chateau.

"Through half-closed eyes I looked across the threshold of the somber hall and toward the great stairway. Everybody was watching the stair, and presently there was a subdued, expectant murmur. "*Voici madame qui descend—voici madame,*" I heard in whispers, which carried a note of relief, of confidence. Numb as I was, a tremor passed through me. And then I heard the tap-tap-tap of even steps, and a white-

clad figure drifted down within my line of vision.

"I find it difficult to tell how she appeared to me as I lay there, an all but disembodied consciousness. What most impressed me was her exquisite harmony with her surroundings. Strong and compassionate and undismayed, she crossed the hall to where I lay, and stood for a moment looking down upon me, her face tender with sympathy, her eyes very dark and deep. "*Quel malheur!*" I heard her say, beneath her breath.

"For myself, there was the odd quality of utter detachment from it all. I could not realize myself that all this was being done for me. She followed me as they carried me up the stairs, and for many hours which followed it was only the delight I found in watching her which held my insecure soul to its heavy body. It would have been so easy to have gently loosed my hold and slipped out into the long, cool shadows. But because of the wish to see her once more I lingered, at times reluctantly. In this desire to see her there was nothing personal, nothing of self. I could not speak, could not feel, could not even formulate an abstract thought. I could only look at my pictures, but as my mental power slowly grew these brought daily a deeper delight. It was then that I began to consider her not as a picture but as a person. I studied her features, her movements, gestures, expression, of which last there was never a woman's face so rich. I watched her, I will confess to my shame, through half-closed lids, when she thought me still wrapped in clouds. My speech was not yet articulate, but to myself I called her my "perfect chatelaine." "These gray walls and velvety lawns and old tapestries all love her," I thought, "because she has been wrought by them and their kind from many generations. No wonder that they enhance her and lend themselves a setting to her faultless grace! No wonder that she cannot strike a note to which they fail to vibrate! They belong to her and she to them, and they love her! Only France could have produced her," I told myself. "My Perfect Chate-laine!"

“And so you can imagine my surprise when one evening she leaned from my window and called down softly to her little son, in English which carried the unmistakable accent of my native Virginia: ‘Your supper is waiting for you, dear!’”

“No wonder she found me with wide, staring eyes when she turned to leave the room! An American woman! She, my Perfect Chatelaine, whom it had taken centuries to perfect, and whom only France could ever have produced! The blood rushed to my head. I swear that it was more of a shock than the four-metre plunge in the racing car!

“And this was the limit of my knowledge concerning her. I knew only that she was the widow of the late Count Etienne de Lancy-Chaumont, that she had a little son whom she adored and a mother-in-law who was jealous of her. This much I learned at Chateau Fontenaye.

“As soon as my doctor would permit, after being taken back to Paris, I wrote to her, and received in answer a charming letter which went far toward hastening my convalescence. Thereafter we wrote frequently, and then one glorious day when I was sitting on the balcony of my studio at Dinard she came to me. She must have seen the soul pouring from my eyes, for her sweet face grew rich as the sunset while her breath came quickly. I rose from my *chaise-longue* and took the small hand which she offered me.

“‘My Perfect Chatelaine!’ was all that I could say.

“This was the beginning of that brief epoch which comes in the earthly cycle of most of us to pay so royally for all of the pain and sorrow and discouragement which go to make a lifetime. Not long after, on the edge of the cliffs at Etretat, whither we had motored with a party, we found ourselves alone, looking out across the bright sunlit sea, the breeze on our faces and the hiss of the breakers on the cobbly beach below. There, her beautiful head against my shoulder and her hands in mine, she confessed to me a love such as I had never dared hope to gain.

“Six weeks later we were quietly

married in the little chapel of Chateau de Fontenaye, and the week following found us in Switzerland. Small need for us to make the ascent of mountains! We dwelt always on the heights, and the clouds formed our carpet. But because we were young and strong and thrilling with life, we must needs make the ascent. We were both experienced Alpinists and loved the sport, and so one day, as if to tempt the high gods who had favored us, we secured our guides—”

Dr. Bayre stopped abruptly.

“At this point,” said he, “the writing was interrupted for several minutes. When it recommenced I observed that the pencil was moving more slowly and in quite a different manner. Leaning forward to look on the pad, I saw to my disgust that the hand had changed its character, while the words themselves were random and foolish.

“‘Some other intelligence has thrust itself in and got control of the medium,’ said my friend. ‘Let us see if we cannot oust him.’

“With that he proceeded to roast some more incense, then placed himself in front of the medium and delivered what appeared to be an exorcism. After that he retraced his circle, wove his pentagrams, mumbled his Sanskrit formula and then requested me to reinvoké the desired entity. This I did, feeling, I must say, rather like a fool, for although my own psychological work may seem dark and mysterious to the uninstructed, it is nevertheless all based on well established scientific knowledge and contains nothing of mummary and such hodge-podge as meaningless incantations and the like. Almost immediately the writing recommenced, and I saw to my gratification that it was in the same hand as the preceding narrative. But it appeared that some of the connecting passages had been lost, for the text began in this manner:

“‘. . . looked over the tossing sea of distant snowpeaks, when the pale beauty of the Alpine dawn burst into flame before the glory of the sunrise.

“‘Side by side in the doorway of the *cabane*, we stood and watched the majesty of day unfold itself upon a

frozen world. Roseate rays shot to the zenith; the cold, hard rim of a distant icepeak melted and swam in the face of the jubilant sun. Then the blue and saffron of the snow mountains were scored by crimson bands, exultant tongues of living flame which leaped from glacier to lofty snow cornice and suffused with blushes the pale face of the virgin snow.

"I turned to look into the face of my bride. Her eyes were brimming, the rosy flush of the sunrise was on her cheeks and her sweet lips quivered. Her gaze met mine and she threw her arms about my neck.

"It is so beautiful that it frightens me!" she whispered.

"What, sweetheart?" I asked. "The Alpine sunrise?"

"Yes," she murmured. "It is like my love for you—each moment growing fuller and more all-possessing."

"Our head guide, Perreton, came to the door of the *cabane* and pointed out to us our route.

"We ascend on this side, madame," said he, "crossing the snow *couloir* you see above you, then following the *arête* to the other side of the *calotte* to the left, thence to the summit. That will take us the better part of the day, but we can *glissade* down very quickly on the other side. It should be easy going. There have been three days of the northeast wind and the snow is in good condition."

"Soon afterward we set out, proceeding in two parties, the first consisting of Perreton, my wife and Regier, while I followed, leading the porter.

"The ascent was safe and easy until, about halfway to the summit, we came to a broad ice traverse where it was decided to rope all together as the crossing was of considerable width, with anchorage here and there at long intervals where the smooth ice was broken by small patches of hard snow. Perreton, who was in the lead, cut the steps with skill and despatch, and we were about halfway across when we found ourselves in a position out of reach of any anchorage and where every member of the party was in danger at the same time. In such a place the rope, although of assist-

ance in maintaining the balance and in giving confidence to the climber, is a deathtrap to the entire party should one member be guilty of a misstep. But mountain climbers are not supposed to make missteps, and it was decided not to unrope.

"Below us the slope descended steeply for perhaps one hundred metres, where it ended abruptly in a precipice. But to experienced climbers like ourselves, possessed of steady heads and with competent guides, the crossing presented the very slightest element of danger. So far was an idea of peril removed from our minds that my wife and I were chatting back and forth as we slowly proceeded.

"Perhaps it was this ill-advised relaxation on our part which led to Zeigler's fatal carelessness. He was the last man on the rope, and halfway over, all our backs being turned to him, he proceeded to light his pipe. As fate ordained, just as the unhappy man was holding the match to the bowl, all his attention centered on the act, I stepped forward. The slack of the rope was in his hands, and as it slightly tautened the pipe was knocked from his mouth and fell. I heard his exclamation, and, glancing over my shoulder, saw him grab for it with his free hand. As he did so his foot slipped, and the next instant he had lost his balance. His *piolet*, or ice axe, the spike of which was jammed into the ice, fell to one side. Realizing his danger, he snatched desperately for the shaft, but failed to grip it, and sent it spinning down the slope, he himself sprawling after it.

"Nothing is more helpless than a climber adrift on an ice slope without his axe, and, realizing the awful danger should the rope spring taut suddenly, I was obliged to let go the shaft of my own *piolet* in order to gather in the slack with both hands. Then I braced my feet to meet the strain. Below me swung Zeigler, quite powerless, and to the right and slightly above me Regier, who saw what had happened, quickly gathered in the slack between himself and me. Then the rope between Zeigler and myself straightened, and to ease the

suddenness of the strain I let it slip slowly between my fingers until it had run its full length and the tug came upon the middleman's knot around my waist.

"And so we stood, Zeigler glaring up from beneath with blanched face and wild, terror-stricken eyes; I myself, barely able to support his weight, wondered how long I could hold him there. Above me, sturdy Regier, his face frozen as rigid as the ice upon which we stood, glanced swiftly from one to the other of us in awful doubt and apprehension.

"Can you hold him?" he cried, and his voice boomed thick and muffled in my ear.

"Not for long," I answered breathlessly.

"He glanced over his shoulder at my wife, and I knew well what was passing in his mind.

"Then cut!" he cried hoarsely. "It is death for all of us!"

"I shook my head, not trusting myself to speak. Regier raised his voice.

"Zeigler!" he cried. "If you are a man—cut the rope!"

"God's mercy!" wailed the wretched porter. "I have no knife!"

"Then slip the bowline!" bellowed Perreton. "Monsieur cannot hold you, and if he falls madame will be dragged to her death!"

"And then, in the awful tension, came the voice of my bride, sweet, tuneful and unafraid.

"Madame goes with her husband," she said.

"Regier swung swiftly in his tracks, growling like a bear.

"Madame remains!" he shouted, and raising her ice axe with one powerful blow, he severed the rope between them, then came toward me, gathering the slack with his free hand.

"But he was too late. Below me Zeigler, himself a brave man and eager to repair his fatal error at any cost, was struggling to loose the "endman's knot" around his waist. The vibration from his movements proved too great a strain for my insecure footing, and I felt the nails of my shoes grinding through the ice.

"Cut between us, Regier!" I cried.

"Never!" snarled Regier, plunging toward me. "Cut below you! Cut! Cut!"

"Cut, m'sieu'!" echoed Zeigler strangelingly. "I tell you to cut!"

"Regier had almost reached me when my foothold was torn away and I felt myself going. "At least," I thought, "there is no need for Regier to die." Snatching the knife from my belt, I slashed through the rope above me, and as I did so I fell forward, slipping down upon Zeigler. But my knife was in my hand, and, throwing myself upon my face, I bore all of my weight upon the haft, driving the point into the ice. For a moment I thought that we might clutch it and arrest our course, but the next instant the blade snapped and I realized that hope was dead.

"Downward we slipped, slowly at first, then with gathering speed. Looking back, I saw my wife, both hands clasped to her mouth, her face writhing in torture. She looked toward Perreton, and I knew as well as though she had spoken the words that had she not been roped to him she would have flung herself downward to join me. The guide himself, reading what was passing in her mind, drew in the slack of the rope between them, and none too soon, for all at once she screamed, and seizing the *piolet* by the head, began to saw impotently at the tough hemp. Perreton cried out, then walked quickly toward her and tore the axe from her hands, and this was the last I saw, my wife and the guide struggling and swaying on the steep, glittering icefield.

"Down we shot, Zeigler and I, toward the fearful brink—and the moments were drawn out into an eternity. Down, on down, tearing our fingers, scraping with our heavy boots, yet speaking no word, writhing and twisting and with ever-gaining speed. Then Zeigler reached the brink—a cry burst from him as he disappeared—the rope tautened violently and I shot forward—forward and over, and saw beneath me the abyss yawning in shadows a thousand feet below. The cold air scorched my face—the soul within me leaped to meet the infinite—and then, oblivion.

"I awoke as from a deep and restful sleep. There was no pain in my body, no sensation but that of dreamy peace and infinite well being.

"Far overhead the stars glittered brightly in the cold, clear sky and the moon looked down directly on me as I lay.

"Slowly consciousness and memory returned. I realized all that had occurred: the fearful accident, the swift gliding down the ice slope, the anguish on the face of my wife, the soaring plunge from the brink.

"A miracle," I thought. "A miracle of miracles. That one can have such a fall and live! Truly, the high gods have worked for me!"

"Awed and wondering, I cast my eyes about. It was a place of snow and stones, ragged boulders and broken fragments of ice. A few feet distant lay the mangled body of Zeigler, and I shuddered while the wonder within me increased.

"How then," I thought, "can it be that I have escaped unhurt, unbruised and more at ease than ever in my life?" I raised myself with a lightness which astonished me, and saw that I lay on broken rocks, jagged and rough—and as I looked my soul was enveloped in a great and awful understanding. For there, grotesquely twisted, lay—*my own body*—and I saw that which told me that there was left in it no trace of what we mortals in our fatuous ignorance call "life."

"Yet with this realization there came no shock, as we mortals know it, but a swift and fearful exhilaration.

"Then I am free—free!" was all that I could feel. "I am free of this heavy, senseless thing that lies mangled here—free to go to her whom I love!" And as if in answer to my thought came a swift and irresistible impulse.

"Light as air, I rose from that dreadful spot and found myself flitting faster than the wind over snow and ice, glacier and moraine, until the lights of the village below me sparkled through the frosty air. Yonder was the Alpine hamlet where we had lodged before beginning our ascent; there the *auberge* where we had slept—and then I had reached it and

drifted on the pale rays of the moon through the frosted window and found myself within the room.

"Other things had passed me and surrounded me in my flight; things which you in your world could not understand and which I myself lack power to express even if I would, for there is no common language with which to interpret the conditions of these two worlds of ours, that of the living and that of the—more alive. As I entered the room all of my disembodied soul poured out to her whom I love.

"Sobbing, sobbing, sobbing—the low, breathless grief of that sweet sufferer who needed only fuller understanding to raise her from the depths of her despair to joy ineffable. For a brief moment it seemed that this had been achieved. From the foot of the bed I whispered her name, and she heard me and with a wild, rapturous cry sprang upright. She saw me standing there in the shimmering moonlight, and I moved to her side and gathered her in my arms, and the next instant her soul had torn its way from the body which enthralled it and we were together, happy beyond description in this new world of mine, while her human habitation fell back upon the pillows in what men call "unconsciousness."

"Yet our peace was not for long. Tied as she was to that earthly vehicle, she was forced to leave me and return, when, according to mortal laws, she carried with her no memory of that which had passed between us but awoke to a grief in which I shared from beyond. Ah, the needless misery of the dear bereaved! If only they knew! If only they knew!

"Since then she has come to me often. But in her waking state all recollection of these communions is swept away, nor have I ever again been able to communicate with her save sleep has loosed the bonds. Even then it happens frequently that her intelligence is dimmed and distorted by those fantastic discharges of the sleeping brain which men call "dreams," and my presence brings neither peace nor understanding. But waking and sleeping I am with her always, bound to this phase by her want

for me, and sometimes she feels my nearness vaguely and it soothes her grief.

"Now I have learned that the strain and the hunger of her desire has nearly broken her resolute spirit, and I know that she has formed the determination to break from her earthly bonds by her own act. Should she do this our meeting must be long delayed, for in this place where I find myself there is no entry for those who with their own hands curtail the mortal span assigned to them. Let her but wait a little while and we shall be together, happy beyond mortal conception. But for the suicide there is still another phase, an intermediate plane, a road still to be traversed before . . ."

"At this point," said Dr. Bayre, "the writing was discontinued. It did not much matter, except in the interest of science, for the message had been delivered. Accordingly I brought the seance to a close.

"The next day I sent for a mutual friend, for of course I recognized the identity of the intelligence who had delivered the message, as no doubt you have done. To this gentleman I showed the writing, without permitting him to do more than glance at the text.

"Is this hand familiar to you?" I asked.

"He nodded, his face very grave.

"Yes," said he; "that is the handwriting of poor Stanley Wetherill. He was killed, as you know, in a mountain accident while on his honeymoon."

"And his wife?" I asked.

"She is a broken-hearted woman."

"Where is she now?" I asked.

"At the Chateau Fontenaye, I believe. She was a widow when Stanley married her. He was badly hurt while automobilizing and taken to the chateau. Perhaps you remember the incident; it seems that Stanley ditched his car to keep from hitting a *char-à-banc* full of children going to a *fête champêtre*."

"I asked him then if he could get me a photograph of Mrs. Wetherill, which he kindly agreed to do.

"That night I made a verbatim copy of the communication and then mailed the original to Mrs. Wetherill with a note explaining the whole affair. Two days later, on opening my newspaper in the morning, I was startled to read the announcement of her sudden death. The notice said that she had been found dead in her *chaise-longue*. In the fireplace were discovered some burned fragments of paper covered with a handwriting which was recognized as that of her late husband. To my infinite relief the post-mortem examination showed that she had died from 'natural causes.'

"That same evening I sent for the medium who had assisted me in the investigation and requested her to look into the crystal ball. After gazing for some time, she saw the faces of a man and a woman. The expressions of both were described by the medium as 'radiant.' I then showed her a photograph of Mr. and Mrs. Wetherill, taken shortly after their marriage.

"Are these the people whom you have just seen?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered, smiling. "They are the same."



NOCTURNE

By Byron Dunne

THE wind that ripples the lakelet at the rising of the moon,
The reeds that rustle with moorfowl, the cry of a lone peewit,
The moaning of the pine trees, and the little waves that croon,
Are filling my heart with a longing for peace and the strength of it.

THE FOOL

By Violet Melville

The great test of a short story—as of a book or a picture—is its appeal to the humanity within us. A writer's technique may be flawless, but if the finished work leave us cold and unsympathetic it falls short of success. This story wins by its great human appeal. It was first published in this magazine in March, 1909, and is here reprinted in response to numerous requests.

DOWN in the heart of Brazil, among the damp, fever-breeding hollows of the rubber district, night was falling over Campanares. From their respective seats on the wide wooden veranda, where they had come to catch the earliest breath of the descending land breeze, the white men of the place exchanged occasional remarks upon the week-old topics which the tardy mail coach from far-away Sao Paulo had brought lumbering along in its wake earlier in the day. Above them and alone, standing before an upper window of the rambling plantation house, another white man looked fixedly out into the sad dusk. He was "the Fool."

Nearly a year before, he had come out to Brazil on the United Rubber Company's medical staff for one of the properties, and they had stationed him at Campanares, ten hours' ride from the village of Rocamonte, and sixty miles, as the crow flies, from any established center of civilization. It was a hard post to fill, for there the low fevers ran riot, and all the medicines had to be brought on muleback from the nearest town, so that sometimes, when there was an oversight and the supplies ran short, men died for the want of them. No other doctor had ever been known to tarry long in that district; indeed, few visited it at

all, for the fame of Campanares had crept down to the very seacoast, and the fame was not enviable. Men do not walk into death traps with their eyes wide open—at least, not often; and when the other white dwellers upon the plantation—scapegraces and prodigal sons who were eating their fill of the husks—learned that there was one coming who might almost be said to have chosen this life-sapping field for his work, they called him a fool for his pains.

A sudden burst of laughter from the veranda broke the perfect evening quiet, and the man at the open window turned quickly away as if the sound had hurt him. In the center of his big, bare room stood a large table littered with books and papers in many languages, and above this, suspended from a heavy rafter by a string, was a lantern. He lit it and, taking up one of the books, began to read. Presently another outbreak of merriment, louder and longer than the first, reached him; he laid down the book, and limping slowly across the floor—he was lame—closed the window gently. The men below caught the sharp "click" of the latch as it fell into place, and one of them jerked his chin toward the veranda roof, saying, "Hark at the Fool shutting out the sound of our levity." Then they laughed again.

There had never been any doubt in their minds as to the fitness of that name since the first evening, when their astounded, half-pitying glances met in mute question behind the dusty, travel-stained newcomer. Once in a while nature produces things that are beyond the reach of human sympathy and words. The Fool was one of these. From the hour of his birth God's hand had lain heavily upon him, making him not in His own image, but rather a caricature of it; silencing the voice of his affliction by a strange and ludicrous impediment of speech, that raised a barrier of unholy laughter between him and his fellow men. Later in life accident had lamed him, and still later fate had laid him upon the rack of his ambitions and broken him upon the wheel of his heart's desire. What remained of him had come forth from that crucible of pain with but a single prayer upon his lips—to be forgotten of the world! To be granted the boon of oblivion! He had sought it in Campanares, Death's anteroom, and there, little recking what they did, men made sport of him, calling him the Fool. Alone he dwelt among them in that strange living silence which was the tragedy of his existence; dodging past them up the dark stairs, to take shelter from their thoughtless persecution in his cold quarters, as a hare flies to shelter in the covert; standing at his window—while they gathered in human fellowship beneath—to look straight away across the whispering treetops, to where the crosses of the Campanares dead lifted themselves against the barren hillside, white and awful in their stiff companionship, to peer down upon the living forgetfulness below.

II

WHEN Lionel Hadley Crayne—that was the Fool's name—came to Campanares there were just nine white men living up at the plantation house in the clearing. As many months before they had been twelve; but one had gone up the river on a hunting ex-

pedition from which he never returned, and the other two were among the heavy sleepers on the hill. The last of their names had only dropped out of the familiar, everyday conversation some five weeks before the Fool's arrival. Those remaining were a rough, happy-go-lucky lot, without refinements of feeling or sentiment, as becomes men who eat, drink and are merry because tomorrow they die. Not that they were godless, or worse than the rest of their kind, but they were just hardened by the heat of the days and the cold of the nights, by the stress and the strain they passed through. That was a land where only the fittest could hope to come to the front, and their first impression of the Fool was that he hadn't any chance—that he would drift away, as so many other weaklings had done, out of the uneasy tides of their existence into calm anchorage among the crosses on the hillside. One day they even told him so, but they found out then that he was not afraid of death. Life had not been kind enough to him for that.

There were other ways, however, in which they made his probation a bitter one, taking no count of the unfairness of the trial, and calling him "a God-forsaken horse doctor" when, at the close of the rainy season, cholera swept the Indian settlements and thinned out the population as a strong wind thins out a canefield. But the Fool was as slow to anger as he was slow of speech, and little by little they learned to let him alone. Then one day they awoke to the knowledge that down in the Indian village people were calling him "Healing Light." From anyone but an Indian the irony of it would have been intolerable, but they didn't mean it that way at all. It was Loftus who first brought the news up to the Big House. The bookkeeper, a lawless spark of a Frenchman called Dupont, received it sneeringly, and wanted to know where the light came in. He had it all his own way in the beginning, for he passed as the wit of the place, and with damning precision he took off every halting movement of the small, lame figure and

the slow, labored manner of speech, until his companions lay back gasping for very shame of such mirth in their chairs. There was but one who did not join in the cruel sport, a woman—a young thing, just passing through on her way to the coast. She turned upon them with scorn on her pale, pinched face.

"Do you really wish to know where the light comes in?" she asked. "Well, I will tell you. That man, whom you all call 'the Fool,' has got eyes like still water under the starlight, and the love of all living creatures is in them. Look and see!"

In days that came afterward they often wondered how this one redeeming feature could have escaped them. Perhaps it was because they were so busy looking for the multitude of his defects.

Soon after that the Fool found a friend. It was this way. Down at Campanares there was an abundance of cats—cats of all colors and sizes, with particularly vicious habits, that prospered at everyone's expense. Once in a while, when they became too numerous for comfort, the men varied their daily monotony by setting traps about the place, such as are set for hares. No one ever knew who was to blame for the setting of one particular trap, but it was carelessly done, they all agreed; and when the gray kitten stumbled across it, instead of working as it was intended, it merely inflicted some horrible injuries across the back, and held the little creature mangled and shrieking, between its teeth. At the Big House they were all smoking on the veranda when this occurred, and through the hot stillness of the moonless evening the mad terror of that complaint cut like invisible knives. Dupont rolled out of his hammock, and Mansarti, the storekeeper, brought his tilted chair down upon its four legs with a bang.

"Caught!" he exclaimed. "Well, that's one less of the beggars." Then as the wild clamor swelled up afresh, he swore and reached out slowly for the long hunting knife where it hung on the rack above him.

"I suppose someone will have to help it die," he grumbled. "Curse the luck, and that clumsy trap! Come on, Dupont."

But there was no need, for almost before the words were spoken a slight, white-clad figure pushed past them all and was gradually swallowed up into the mysterious gloom of the encroaching undergrowth.

"That's the lonely party from upstairs," observed the Frenchman, turning back to his hammock with a sigh of relief. "Wonder what he'd say if he knew we set the traps?"

"H'm!" said someone else, between long puffs at a cigar. "It *is* rather beastly, don't you know."

When the Fool came back, he was walking very slowly, holding against his blood-bespattered coat something small that quivered and panted and choked sickeningly at every few steps he took. They heard him go upstairs and close the door of his room. A few moments later anesthetics heavy and sweet of smell stole out into the night air from the windows overhead, and the horrible, suggestive strangling ceased. Many days later, the gray kitten came crawling out of the Doctor's room. Its fur was like new-spun satin, and it showed very plainly the humanity and tenderness of one man. But it was deformed—hopelessly, terribly deformed—and there was a place across the back where the trap had caught it, on which no hair would ever grow. In fact, notwithstanding its very evident enjoyment of the comforts of life, the nine downstairs were inclined to believe that the best solution of the problem had lain after all in Mansarti's hunting knife. To the Fool, of course, this argument was meaningless; but as soon as he found that they did not take kindly to his pet he carried it back to his room and they seldom saw it about after that.

III

So up there in the cheerless silence, evening after evening, the deformed man and the distorted animal drew

closer together, held by who knows what affinity of fates and dumb suffering. Once or twice, when a rare chance carried any of the other men to the Doctor's room, they had found him very quietly reading, the kitten curled within the hollow of his arm; and when, in the waning light, he would lay aside his book and take up his slow, regular walk before the windows, they knew that he carried the little unsightly body pressed hard against his own.

But these things were not all. Through the long, many-voiced blackness of a Brazilian night, when the dark veranda lay silent and empty, the kitten had known its bedfellow to steal away and stand among the vacant chairs, as if they had a message for him—some lingering echo of the light hearts that had earlier filled them; it had seen a man's head bowed down beside its own, and learned the feeling of tears—a man's hard, noiseless tears—upon its glossy fur. And then, without prelude of any sort, the end of this friendship was upon them, sudden and sharp as the snapping of the trap that began it.

They all knew that Dupont had been drinking. Not to excess on any particular day, but unsociably and systematically for weeks past, locking himself into the office with the neglected account book night after night until dawn was yellowing in the sky. So when he rose from the breakfast table one Sunday morning and suggested a visit to the Doctor's room—Dr. Crayne always ate alone—everyone foresaw trouble. One or two, remembering that there had always been more than a spice of antagonism in his mocking attitude toward the Fool, even tried to dissuade him, but to no purpose, for in the end he went stumbling up the stairs by himself.

"His eyes looked ugly," said Hermann Weyrauch, when he had passed out of earshot. "I wish he would leave the Fool alone. Why don't we go and pull him back?"

Weyrauch was a very decent sort, as men went in Campanares.

"Take my tip," drawled Hurl, the assistant bookkeeper, "and leave Du-

pont to look after his own affairs. I guess the Doctor's dealt with his kind before. All I can tell you is, that he doesn't look one bit uglier than he feels. There's been hell to pay in the office for a week past."

"Getting generous with your advice, Hurl?" asked Ryan sleepily. "Pity, though! He's not half a bad sort, Dupont isn't, but drink is the deuce and all for changing a man. The deuce and all!"

Meanwhile, Dupont gained the landing at the head of the stairs, and entered the Doctor's room with a loud stamping of feet and slamming of doors. What transpired after that remained forever a question. When he came to his right senses Dupont had forgotten, and the Fool never told. But at the end of some fifteen minutes, when those below were becoming anxious, the sharp, wild scream of an animal in pain brought them all to their feet in a moment.

"The kitten!" said Hurl. "I thought as much."

Mansarti, who was nearest the door, wrenched it open in a flash, and they crowded out into the passageway at the foot of the steep flight of steps. At the same instant the doors above flew noisily apart, and Dupont appeared upon the landing. He had the gray kitten in one hand, and with the other arm he warded off Dr. Crayne, with the consummate ease of a grown man holding a child at bay.

"You think you can fight me, do you?" he snarled. "You sickly, lame-legged quack, you! You left-handed, stammering mockery of a man! Bah! Take your vermin—I don't want it."

With an evil laugh he raised the struggling kitten above his head and dashed it down at the full strength of his brutal arm. It never even quivered when it fell; the height had been too great.

"You beast!" shouted Ryan, starting up the steps. The next second he shuddered back, covering his eyes with his hand, for with one sweep of his powerful frame the Frenchman had taken the Fool off his feet and pushed

him, head foremost, from the landing. The helpless human body came thudding down swiftly, lodging for a breathing space at the angle of the stairs, turning convulsively and falling again more slowly. When it was within two feet of him Ryan put out his hand and arrested it. "Doctor," he whispered, "Dr. Crayne . . . for God's sake!"

By way of answer the Doctor rose unsteadily to his feet. His dark eyes were literally ablaze, and the first instinctive thing he did was to push away the friendly grasp that held him, and lean upon the balustrade instead. For once—the only time in all their experience of him—he was insensible to a service rendered.

"Leave me," he panted. "You have had your sport—leave me."

He sank down upon the stairs again and dropped his colorless face, damp with moisture, into his hands. Then deliberately—with that strange confusion of sounds which served him for words—he began to speak. The network of conventionalities and the guard of silence with which he covered the nakedness of his affliction had fallen from him together, and cold and terrible in its humiliation, grim, hopeless, austere in its loneliness, the man's cramped, palpitating soul took form upon his quivering lips.

"Leave me," he said again. "You have mocked me, shunned me, taunted me for a fool, and now you have half killed me. Surely it is enough."

It was as if the long pent-up anguish of the months behind had swept over him suddenly, and swamped his self-control in its bitterness.

"Ah, you don't understand—you *can't* understand what you have done. To you it was only a kitten like any other, but it filled my world. None of you ever tried to do that, and I have never expected it. Men"—he included them all in one comprehensive gesture—"men like you don't fraternize with *things* like me, and perhaps it is well that you shouldn't. But the kitten was different; it was only a dumb brute, and it could not see the hideousness of me, any more than it could real-

ize that its own hideousness was the strongest link in the chain that bound it to me. I used to sit and school myself to look upon its deformity with unmoved eyes, so as to take the sting out of the intimate horror of what I know myself to be. And I loved it, for I owed it something. I saved it to be what it was; it had not asked to live any more than I did. I"—there was another spasmodic movement of the hands that covered his face—"I have sometimes questioned the justice of God in making me at all; and many a night in the room upstairs, when you were merrymaking beneath the windows, nothing greater than the kitten has stood between me and the madness of my thoughts."

He paused suddenly, and turned toward the heap of gray fur on the floor. A look of something awful came over his face, and he got stiffly to his feet and began to come down the remaining steps.

"Clear out!" said Ryan, waving those behind him away. "Let us all clear out and shut the doors." But even with the doors shut they could not help hearing when the halting feet paused, and the Fool lifted the dead animal to his breast.

"God!" he said quite aloud. "Oh, God!—God!—God!"

Then there was silence.

IV

For ten days after that no one saw the Fool, with the exception of the servant who took up his meals, and he brought word that the Doctor was always to be found lying in a long cane chair before the window. They gathered from this that he had suffered injury from the fall, but some inexplicable feeling bade them respect that closed door and forbear to inquire. Then, on the tenth day, Dupont fell ill. Hurl, in pink sleeping suit and great trepidation, knocked at Mansarti's door on Tuesday morning, and unburdened his soul. He had always shared a room with Dupont. It was fever, he

said, with a few alcoholic complications thrown in for the sake of variety, and the Doctor would have to be called. So about half an hour later, in response to Hurl's message, the Doctor came down. He was looking thin and limping terribly; indeed, he could hardly walk at all without the aid of a stick.

"Thank you," he said to Ryan, who met him in the dining room. "No, I have not been ill. Is Dupont's door the third or fourth in the passage?"

When he came out after paying his visit to the sick man his face was very grave. Instead of returning to his room as they had expected, he took a chair near the end of the passage, and sat looking thoughtfully out through the open doorway.

"You mustn't mind me," he said presently to Hurl. "Your friend is rather ill, and I want to see him again in a few moments. I should go up to my room, but the stairs"—with the shadow of a smile—"the stairs are steep and they tire me." He glanced down involuntarily at his leg and turned back to the door.

"Doctor," said Hurl, acting on a sudden impulse, "are you badly hurt?"

The Fool looked round with something like surprise not untouched by constraint.

"Hurt? Oh, no, it was nothing. It has passed."

"But the stick— Will it be long before—"

The Fool looked away, and hesitated.

"It will be all my life," he replied at last. Then, as the passionate regret in the other man's face struck him, he added hastily: "But don't let that worry you, Hurl. It was always rather bad, and my beauty can take a lot of spoiling."

With the day's decline Dupont grew rapidly worse. After three o'clock in the afternoon Dr. Crayne hardly left his bedside, and when evening fell he ordered one of the servants to bring down the cane chair and a couple of rugs for him. "I shall stay down here tonight, perhaps tomorrow," he told Loftus, who overheard the request. "No, there isn't any cause for anxiety

—yet, but it is best to be on hand. Besides, it will save someone else the trouble of sitting up. Tiring? Well, a little, but then it's my work, you know, and there is always the whole day to rest in."

Through the weeks that followed a shadow settled upon the dwellers up at the Big House. Dupont's place was not one to be easily filled, and hope grew faint as day succeeded day without bringing any appreciable change in the darkened room. Even the Doctor lost his little trick of smiling confidently into the questioning faces, and strange lines penciled themselves upon his own; but his interest never wavered, nor the faithful, untiring service that knew no limit of light or darkness, although the purple rings lay an inch deep in the hollows under his eyes. And in the end, when the long, unhealthy dry season was drawing to a close, the shadow of death spread its dark wings and passed away from the house. One morning very early, as the other men sat at coffee, the Fool appeared in the doorway. He was unshaven and sharp-featured for lack of sleep, and the words did not come any more readily than of old; but, ah, they did not see these things with the same eyes now, for they had watched him strive mightily for a life that was one of their own, and the result of that striving was written upon his queer, plain face with a beauty that nothing could dim.

Hurl spoke first, an odd break in his voice: "He will live, Doctor? Bully for you, by Jove!"

As Mansarti observed one day shortly after, the tale of the white men at Campanares was getting to be rather unpleasantly like the old nursery rhyme which begins: "Ten little niggers sitting in a line; one fell off and then there were nine." It was good to think that, for a time, at least, the falling-off process had been checked. And in this thought, and the sight of Dupont's white, hollow face grinning cheerfully up out of the hammock, lay the first beginning of the love wherewith in after days they loved the Fool.

Meanwhile, together with his cane chair and his rugs, Dr. Crayne had stolen

quietly back to his room above, leaving the man he had saved to foregather with his friends as in times past. Up there in the sunny solitude of working hours and the chill darkness of nights, he took up, one by one, the threads of his old existence just where he had laid them down when Dupont fell ill, but he walked no more before the open windows when the daylight died. He would draw up the cane chair instead, and stretch himself upon it, staring away and away into the fathomless sea of shadows with his mournful, inscrutable eyes. But one evening after dinner there were voices, or rather a voice, in the Doctor's room, and when the men assembled upon the veranda Dupont's hammock swung empty in the breeze. They passed it over in silence, for under the dull green of the rubber trees chief of all unwritten laws was this: that a man should mind his own affairs. Later on, however, Dupont appeared, and as he settled himself and lighted a cigar he remarked suddenly: "Don't you think that some of us might make a point of dropping in upon the Doctor now and then? He tells me that—since he hurt his leg, his work is as much as he can manage with those stairs, so it's up to us to make the first move."

Ryan, who was balanced insecurely on the veranda rail, turned his head with suspicious quickness, but when he spoke his voice was perfectly level. "Right," he said, replying for all, "if we'll not be too much in the way, but—while I think of it, Dupont, what was that I heard you saying this morning about the new import duties upon liquor?"

V

AFTER that evening it seemed the most natural thing in the world for one or two to drift from the dinner table into the Doctor's room; and, as the weeks passed, the indefinable attraction that hovered in the atmosphere drew the company by threes and fours, until the veranda came to be a haunt for bats and other winged creatures of the night alone. Whenever their vari-

ous duties permitted it, the merry crowd assembled, closing in, quick of wit and light of heart, around the cane chair with its silent occupant. And when, from across half the world, they looked back upon that life in Campanares, it was so that they chose to remember it, reaching out to something better and higher than the mere bread of every day, among the half lights and the peace of that upper room.

Moon upon moon waxed and waned, and August faded into December as if by magic. That was the second year of the Fool's life at Campanares, and on the evening of the thirty-first he came limping down to dinner. This was a great concession, for the old sensitive shrinking back, the old habits of eating and sitting alone, had never been wholly laid aside. The man looked much changed; he had been hardly strong of late, and there was some talk of sending him away from Campanares for a rest, but he was unwilling to go.

"Don't try to get rid of me," he would say. "I hate strangers, and you haven't so very much longer to suffer, you know. In December next my time here will be out, and then—well, perhaps I shall go home. Who can tell?"

That evening, as soon as dinner was over, the Fool excused himself. He was going back to his room, he said, and would wait for them there; they must all come. After he had gone, Dupont sat very silent at the head of the table, fingering the rim of his glass thoughtfully. Suddenly he rose and stood facing the others, glass in hand.

"Gentlemen," he began abruptly, "ever since I came to Campanares we have made it a custom to drink on this night to those few across the seas who are dear to us. It is our one spoken recognition of the home ties that still bind us. Tonight I am going to ask you to reverse the order of things, and begin by drinking with me to one here." He lifted the glass a little higher than all might see. "It is, 'The Fool, messieurs.'"

And they passed it on, from the

bright circle of lamplight near Dupont's place to the last man standing to honor the toast at the foot of the table. "The Fool—the Fool!"

On the seventh day of the new year the plague—which for months past had been scouring the Pacific coast of South America—made its appearance in the interior of Brazil. Ten weeks later it came to Rocamonte.

"I am not surprised," said Dr. Crayne when the men crowded up to him, grave of face and anxious, bringing the news. "The wonder is that it did not happen before. Personally, I have been on the lookout a long time, making such provision as I could against infection among the Indians here. You will find things a little cleaner down in the village, and that is all-important. This afternoon we will redouble the precautions, and there will be fumigations and all sorts of nice things going on. And remember," he added kindly, "there will be plenty of time to pull long faces when I give the signal. Don't begin now."

They listened to that quiet, hesitating voice like children who are frightened by the darkness, and then, without looking in each other's eyes, took up their courage in both hands and turned away.

The following day all the laboring hands that could be spared, together with the women and the children, were sent away to more distant properties, so as to lighten the burden of those who would have to be cared for in case of a visitation. Then every nook and corner of Campanares underwent a rigorous cleansing under the Doctor's supervision, until soapsuds and other things less inoffensive pervaded with their smell the very atmosphere of dreams. At that high tension all lived for the following two months, and Mansarti, who was growing ethereal with much scrubbing in the storeroom department, began to lose his fine appreciation of that state which is said to be next to godliness.

"When the plague is over," he would announce viciously, "I sha'n't wash my face for a month. It will be such a

relief to feel just comfortably reckless for once. I wager I can smell carbolic in the soup this minute."

So did they manage to make light even of death.

When February came the doom of Rocamonte was sealed, or so it seemed for a little while. People read in the official journals that the government, suddenly awakening to the desperate straits of the villagers—a retired apothecary was all the doctor they had—had advertised for medical volunteers to go there, and that none were forthcoming. With the plague here, there and everywhere, as it was, the volunteers had been exhausted, perhaps, or else none of them cared to die in such a forgotten hole, and for such a lost cause. This was almost excusable. Rocamonte, sunk among the winding foothills, with its eight thousand-odd souls, was very picturesque; but Rocamonte, with its one broad road that led into the village and tailed away at the other end until you lost it among the swaying broom weed that overran the graves in the Campo Santo, was for all the world like one of those traps with which mice are decoyed to destruction through the glamour of an ample doorway that opens only once.

"It is very terrible," said the Fool, speaking of this matter one day. "Of course, whoever goes in there now as good as leaves hope behind; still, someone . . ."

VI

ONE morning about two weeks later Ryan, who was always the first up, surprised the small, lame figure booted and spurred, standing behind a screen of cactus to the left of the house.

"Going out for a ride, Doctor?" he asked in his cheery way.

The Fool looked up with a start. "Hush," he replied very softly. "I did not wish you—any of you—to know, but there was some mistake about the horse. I wanted the oldest mount upon the place, something that is of no value, and I have sent the boy back to look for it, so it can't be helped. I have left

a letter on my table explaining everything, and I must get away quietly before the others dress. I don't want to go, for, although I am a doctor, I have always shrunk from certain diseases, and this is horrible—horrible! But someone must. I hope you'll understand."

When Ryan entered the dining room that morning Dupont had not yet appeared. The Irishman walked straight across to his chair without looking to right or left and sat down all in a heap, leaning his head on his hand. From the fringe of his dark hair to the collar of his colored shirt, his face was absolutely and uniformly gray. Hermann Weyrauch glanced at him keenly as he passed; a moment later he turned and followed him to his place.

"What's up, Ryan?" he asked kindly, laying his large hand lightly on the younger man's shoulder. "You don't look quite yourself. Is it the fever? Let me call the Fool."

At the sound of that name Ryan sprang up, shaking off the other's touch as one brushes away a fly. He walked over to the windows hastily, pausing before each of the three in turn to look out. There was nothing to see but the sharp ridge of the cactus fence, and beyond it the fresh green of young leaves rustling in the early morning sunshine. Something in the familiar outlook seemed to unnerve Ryan.

"The Fool!" he exclaimed, turning to face the German suddenly. "There isn't any Fool at Campanares now. I said good-bye to him half an hour ago behind that hedge. He has gone away."

Then he pulled himself together and told them all he knew. They were still standing in helpless silence round him when Dupont's door opened, and they heard him come leisurely down the passage whistling the "Marseillaise." And it was terrible! Not because those who were present loved the Doctor less, but because Dupont—by reason of that natural law which decrees that those who sin deepest shall deepest atone—loved him even better.

That night the papers that reached Campanares—they were four days old—informed the public through the

medium of five printed lines that one volunteer, and one alone, had offered himself for Rocamonte. His name was Lionel Hadley Crayne.

When they came to read the letter that the Fool had left upon his table, they found that his departure, which had come upon them like a dream in the night, was the result of a long and wearing battle with self. The haste of his going had not been so great but that at times the magnitude of his undertaking seemed temporarily to overwhelm him. There were places in that letter where it was easy to see that the practical, well balanced mind of the physician had given way suddenly before the raw emotions of the mere man. Here and there the armor of scientific stoicism would fall a little apart, disclosing the shrinking human nature underneath, and the sight was not pleasant. Mind and matter alike recoiled at the thought of the loathsome stronghold of death. Flesh and blood uprising, in spite of intellectual barriers arrayed against them, clamored with twofold madness for recognition of that first and greatest of animal instincts, the instinct of self-preservation.

Seen, as they saw it, all unconsciously portrayed upon paper, the man's soul was livid with fear; from first to last it was dumbly appealing—with silent, immeasurable woe of foreknowledge—against its own decree. He knew, in all its unspeakable hideousness and corruption, the cup from which he was about to drink, and bending toward it at the last, the wild horror of its foulness overcame his courage for a while. Still he went, and surely the fortitude of that going can only be proven by the might of the weakness that dragged at him to hold him back. Beside the avowed frailty of his farewell letter to his friends was set the calm, hopeful strength of his departure, when he turned his face relentlessly northward and rode away from Ryan with a set smile on his lips. He embodied then the highest ideal of bravery a man may hold: he understood, he was afraid, and yet—he dared!

By copies of letters which had been

exchanged with the head office it was found that Dr. Crayne, in asking to be released from his contract, had bound himself over to return, if he lived, and complete the few remaining months of his term at Campanares. It was with this understanding that he had finally gone to Rocamonte. It was with this hope set daily before them that those who were left behind rose up to face the cold, suggestive stillness of the room upstairs, and the veil of mystery that had closed about its living occupant in the damp grayness of the dawn. The strictest quarantine regulations hemmed Rocamonte in from all intercourse with the outer world, and the ten hours' ride that lay between Dr. Crayne and Campanares held him as effectually apart from the men there as the six feet of fresh earth on a grave divide the living and the dead.

With something of the heavy hopelessness of death, too, did the inmates of the Big House look up at the blank windows that stared down upon them as they rode in from the day's work, shunning, amid their stream of lighter observations, the mention of one name, while all about them the great silence of the night lifted up its wordless longing for the man who was not. By common consent they sought forgetfulness in the old places on the veranda, thereby outraging a colony of bats that had taken possession. Here they would sit and make believe to talk, but on many evenings it was only a pretense of the poorest kind, and the end was always the same. Dupont would throw away his half-smoked cigar, and without warning sit up in his swaying hammock, clasping his hands about his knees. "I wonder—" he would begin, his eyes fixed hungrily on the nothingness of the darkness. Presently he would slip away quietly, and go to bed. That was how they remembered the Fool at Campanares.

VII

ALL the while, just hidden from their sight by ten hours of dusty road and a spur or two of the blue foothills,

among the desolated homes of the sunny little village the flower of the Doctor's life service was opening to its close. What the real history of that struggle was no man has come forward to say, but the rough outline of it is written broad and bold on the lonely valley in characters of earth. You can read it any day as you ride along the edge of the Haunted Dip where, looking down, the eye picks out the long furrows, marked by a cross at each end to show where they piled in the dead. That is the old plague burial ground, which the Fool opened and closed. Something it will tell you about the weight with which the hand of Pestilence fell upon those unsuspecting wretches, living, marrying and making merry in the remote village of Rocamonte. Something, too, about the godlike struggle which one man made to shake it off. It is true that he was twisted, lame, incoherent of speech, bat-eared and physically puny, but what does that matter now? Which of those to whom he appeared in their Gethsemane, with the promise of life held out, will ever set that against him when they weigh him in the scale with other men?

The plague ran itself out, as everything will, and on the last day of October the quarantine was raised. The next day the Fool came "home." Just as dusk was deepening and closing in upon Campanares, there was a sound of a horse's feet plodding carefully over dry twigs. A moment later they had turned the cactus hedge and come to a sudden halt in front of the house.

When everyone else drew back Dupont was still standing in the center of the clearing holding the Fool crushed up against his heart, and in the bold, handsome face which he bent down above the Doctor there was something wonderful and holy, that outweighed a thousandfold the tenderness of women. Looking up, the Fool read it, and in a sort of benediction that was new to that land and that life, he lifted his hand and touched the Frenchman. With that touch the last stiver of the debt between them was wiped away.

They drew the Doctor in under the lamplight and crowded about him with a thousand eager questions on their lips, and a thousand other unspoken thoughts in their eyes, which told him how high they ranked the thing that he had done. He stood among them listening while they talked as one man—for they had laid aside their reserve—then in the final pause he opened his lips to reply, but all he said was: "It is going round! The walls—the floor—the world!" And with that he stumbled forward and lay still at their feet.

VIII

THAT was the manner of Lionel Hadley Crayne's second coming to Campanares. He never left it again. Day after day in that upper room he sat very faintly smiling, empty-handed and with closed eyes, as if he were absorbed in drinking in the rare charm of absolute idleness after the unceasing labors of Rocamonte. Below stairs men fell into the habit of walking with careful steps and speaking with bated breath, for gradually they began to realize that the man who had returned to them out of the fiery furnace of torment and terror was not the man who had ridden away on that March morning. Something of himself had the Fool left behind among those hundreds of nameless graves, and it seemed as though he was going back to join it. Without any known illness or suffering, he was slipping away from them, going further and further out into the borderlands of eternity every evening, while they gathered about the poor shadow that lay in the old cane chair.

"This is December, is it not?" he asked one night a little wistfully. "I was to have gone home in December. You won't think I mind staying here if I seem to weary of the place sometimes, will you? It is—almost sad to think that I shall not see an English sky again. The skies here are bluer, perhaps, but an English sky covers home. You understand that, don't you? It is

like the dream of spring flowers and the little children picking them in the fresh English meadows that used to haunt me all during the first weeks of my stay in Rocamonte, where there were only the corpses festering, four and five in a house."

That night Dupont mounted a boy and sent him off on a two days' ride to another plantation where they had a resident doctor. When he came back to the house Ryan was holding forth hopefully to the rest of the men on the probabilities of the Fool's recovery, and as the Frenchman appeared he appealed to him for support; but gravely and slowly Dupont shook his head.

"No go, Ryan," he said, putting out his hand. "Don't cheat yourself any more. Between us here, and those at Rocamonte, we have killed him. Good night."

It lacked five days to Christmas when one evening, as they were rising to take their leave, Dr. Crayne lifted his hand and beckoned them back. There were only four of them, Ryan, Hurl, Loftus and Dupont, for they had lately agreed to take it in turns to go up, so that the Doctor's room might be quieter.

"Stay," he said simply. "I am not sleepy tonight."

They reseated themselves at once, and to break an awkward silence Ryan observed abruptly: "Three years ago there were only nine of us here at this time; you didn't come until the middle of January, Doctor."

"No," said the Fool, "not until the middle of January, and now I am going away."

Then with a very calm face he turned to Dupont.

"There is something I want you to promise me, something I want done when I am dead. No," he entreated as the Frenchman leaned forward impulsively, "don't interrupt me; there is nothing to be sorry about. I have known that I was dying for a long time, since the close of the quarantine, and I came back here to die. I want to set out on that journey from this room. I—I love this room, and when I am gone from it you must not put another

man in here to live. Just close the shutters and speak of it always as mine,—as the Fool's, you know."

Dupont shifted his position so that his hand might shade his face from the light. It was *his* name; *he* had given it, and here was the retribution. The slow, quiet voice went on. Now that speech came so deliberately, the old stammering was hardly noticeable.

"You must not think—any of you—that I mind that name now. I should like to tell you, since I am dying, that there was a time when I hated it. I came to Campanares to forget that I was I, and it was an ever present reminder of my failure. One night in particular, I remember, there was a woman here, a stranger, and Dupont—"

The hand that shaded Dupont's face trembled a protest, but he did not try to defend himself from what was coming, for, though the reckoning was gall and wormwood to him, he saw the justice of it all.

"—Dupont made mock of me, until I cried out to God to rid me of myself. I saw myself then as other men must have always seen me—a thing apart from the rest of my kind. That hurt stayed with me a long while, and the name you had given me rankled, because I saw that it fitted me as his motley and bells fit a clown. But another night, last New Year, I heard 'the Fool' upon your lips again. I had stopped to rest midway upon the stairs, and I could not help but hear. Somehow the sound of it had changed. When the last man of you had spoken I crept on up here and sat by this window, going back—going over—thinking. Before you came I had found out that to be Fool among you was destiny enough. Now that I am dying—"

He hesitated, and laid his hand on Dupont's arm. When he spoke next, it was to the Frenchman alone.

"Now that I am dying, I feel that I would rather be remembered by it than by any other name on earth. This will be for you to see to. I know that you are skilled in wood carving—I have watched you at work sometimes—therefore—" The thin fingers tight-

ened pleadingly upon the other's sleeve. "Most of the names out there on the hill are painted upon the wooden crosses, and in years, with sun and rain, some have quite disappeared, so that the thing below is nameless, and no one can claim kinship with it. I do not want that to happen to me; therefore—" Once again there came that tightening of thin fingers. "It will be no great task; only 'the Fool,' and, if you wish, the date."

Then Dupont bowed his head over the hand that lay upon his arm.

"I cannot do it," he said between deep breaths. "Anything but that—any name. Do not ask me again; I would rather cut my hand off. *O, très cher, ne me demande pas ça.*"

The Fool turned wondering eyes upon the speaker.

"I thought you understood that everything has been repaid threefold. Don't you see?"

Dupont shook his head without speaking. In his eyes the past stood paramount.

"Why," continued the Doctor, gravely and kindly, "I would rather have 'The Fool' written over me than my father's name. Lionel Hadley Crayne, they will tell you in England, was a poor thingummy who dreamed dreams, but the Fool—you loved him."

Then the promise was given.

When they said good night to the Doctor that night it was with a strange sense of having touched the real man at last. They knew so much more now of the meaning of that solitary pacing before the open windows, and of the emotions which had dashed themselves out within the space of the four bare walls. He could never again be just "the Fool." He had drawn the breath of another man's life into his lungs, and he was a personality forevermore because of the other man's suffering and sacrifice.

Dupont was the last to come up to the Doctor's chair, and he stood beside it for several moments looking down in stern, rugged sorrow upon the man he loved. At the sight of him a smile of infinite sweetness and understanding

flitted across the Fool's pale face, and shone through the haunting weariness that slept ever in his beautiful eyes. He put out both his hands in a little boyish gesture.

"Dupont—good night."

For answer Dupont bent over the chair, and quite simply before the three who waited on him, kissed the Fool upon his mouth. It was as if he had known. For when the dawn of the next day came whitely over the misty hills, the rollcall of the white men at Campanares—as once three years before—was nine. During some dark hour of the silent night the Presence had come in to him at last, and the Fool had met it without fear, lying in the old cane chair before the open window. They found him there next morning, his rough hair stirred by the night winds, and almost gold against the pallor of his forehead; his sealed lips still faintly smiling at them out of the peace into which he had entered.

"So," said Hurl gently, as he turned the shutter to keep out the lengthening sunbeams, "he has gone home in December, after all."

At nine o'clock the doctor they had summoned came. He was really distressed when Weyrauch met him and told him that the Fool was dead. He had been absent and missed Dupont's messenger, he said, and there had been cases of smallpox on his return which he could not leave; then he had been laid up with a sprain for a week. All these things he told them almost before he dismounted, pouring them out amid a constant stream of regrets, and making much bustle and haste now that the need for haste was past. Then he asked to see that which lay smiling in the quiet room above. They led the way up the creaking stairs, but on the threshold they drew back, and the man of science went in alone.

IX

WHEN he came out a complete change had passed over his manner. The noisy confusion of words was

checked, and he did not speak professionally.

"I knew him," he said simply. "I was at Guy's the day he passed. He carried everything before him, and I believe his record at Oxford was the same—a wonderful mind. The men who trained him expected great things of him, but he lost the incentive to achieve at the start, and he gave up his high ambitions. You see, there was a woman who loved him, and she died. I attended her in the last stages of her illness, and I saw that upon the man's life her mark was everywhere. She had chosen for her field of work the world of interests that lay beneath the physical barriers that hemmed him in, and it was springing into something like glory at her touch when her hands laid down the task. I don't know if you follow me, but what I am trying to tell you is that the very mainspring of Lionel Crayne's brief success lay in the fact that one woman believed in him and told him so. I think she made him feel that his creation was not a mistake, because she appealed to him just where he was strong and would not have her appeal denied. And it is no wonder that he buried himself down here to get away from the dust of his dreams. I could almost have foretold it, for when I saw him straighten up from leaning over that deathbed, I read it in his face that he and Fame were to be strangers. From that hour the will to strive, like the body it had inspired, was lamed. And now to think of my finding him here like this! After Rocamonte, too, wasn't it grand? Poor Crayne, the pity is that his life might easily have been saved; nothing in the world wrong with him but weak heart action and overstrain. Died at about three this morning, I should say, probably in his sleep. Shall we go downstairs now?"

That afternoon they buried him in the little cemetery.

No one ever knew where Dupont spent that first night while the Fool slept dreamlessly out on the wind-swept hill, with the newly turned earth pressing in lightly around him.

Certainly he was not with Hurl, nor was he resting, for in the morning the cross for the grave was lying carved and ready to be placed, on a table in the passage. It was beautifully done, but the dumb wood showed something more than beauty—something deeper that lay near to the worker's heart. As Ryan and Loftus saw it that morning, this was what Dupont had carved upon the cross:

Sacred to the Memory of the Fool.

Aged Twenty-nine.

And below—as if the hand had refused to be stayed,

Bien-aimé.

"I could not," he explained when he came out and found them standing there, "I could not leave it like that. It was all right for us—we knew; but some day a stranger might come, and having read that name, turn away with a laugh from his grave. I could not stand that; the fear of it would haunt me, and so . . ."

And so it stands in silent testimony above him, holding in its strange contradiction of words the Alpha and Omega of the three years' struggle which he made; shielding, with the tenderness of that "well beloved," the Fool from the laughter of his kind.

Over in Rocamonte they have built up a stone cross at the entrance to the village. It is the first thing the traveler sees as he turns the curve of the road, and little children who were unborn when it was erected have grown up to manhood and womanhood since, for it is nearly forty years old. Cut into the grain of the rock is the Fool's name, Lionel Hadley Crayne, and among the villagers it is a name to conjure by. Mothers teach their toddling babies to put fresh grasses and flowers on it when they pass that way, and so it happens that there is always something tender and living under that beloved lettering, as if it were the memory of the man himself made visible.



WOMEN

By Ethelwyn Wetherald

EVEN the worst pessimist does not believe that woman can do as much harm with a ballot as she once did with an apple.

A woman would rather be thought young and be sought after by men she half despises than be considered old and receive attention from men she wholly respects.

To a woman of fifty every man is a boy.

The young girl gives a dollar for ribbons to match her complexion; the woman gives a fortune for a complexion to match her ribbons.

Perseverance will win nine women out of ten. The tenth woman has lots of perseverance herself.

A man who knows what is in books is no match for a woman who knows what is in men.

The reason a woman can't get on with her cook is because she insists that nobody in the house but herself has a right to be emotional.

THE OTHER FELLOW

By Maverick Terrell

CHARACTERS

THE MAN

THE WOMAN

THE OTHER FELLOW

SCENE: *Her home.*

TIME: *Early evening.*

THE MAN (*entering abruptly*)—I should have knocked. (*Holding up his hand*) I know, dear. I was in a hurry.

THE WOMAN (*from the couch*)—That's all right—this time.

THE MAN (*as he shuts the door*)—I am worried.

THE WOMAN (*almost sympathetically*)—Anything wrong downtown?

THE MAN—Nothing there—outside of the usual worries. I—

THE WOMAN (*with rising interest*)—Something here?

THE MAN (*as he starts to pace the floor*)—Possibly. Where did you go this afternoon?

THE WOMAN—Why?

THE MAN—My interest is natural. I thought I saw you.

THE WOMAN—You saw me! Where?

THE MAN—Of course I wasn't sure. Where were you?

THE WOMAN (*amused*)—If you must know—here—at home—where every dutiful wife should be.

THE MAN (*drily*)—I see. Anyone been here this afternoon?

THE WOMAN—What's the matter? I know something's wrong now. You should leave the office downtown.

THE MAN—No doubt I seem unreasonable, inquisitive. Somehow my nerves lately—

THE WOMAN—Yes, I've noticed—your nerves.

THE MAN—Every man—cultured, of course—is the same—beneath the veneer.

THE WOMAN—If you go deep enough, I suppose. One cannot go too deep—in a man—without—

THE MAN—Without—what?

THE WOMAN (*smiling*)—Without coming through the other side!

THE MAN—I'm far from joking. I am serious. I am worried about one thing only—just now. It concerns—

THE WOMAN (*interrupting*)—Me!

THE MAN—Yes—you.

THE WOMAN (*good-humoredly*)—Why all this courtroom manner? Why don't you ask me right out—without this cross-examination air—

THE MAN—What?

THE WOMAN—What man has been here this afternoon!

THE MAN (*coolly*)—What made you think I was interested?

THE WOMAN (*knowingly*)—Your sex. (*With a laugh*) I will relieve you. Never mind the confession.

THE MAN (*drily*)—Thanks. Who was here, or, rather, if you will pardon the twist, who is here now?

THE WOMAN—I was certain of it. (*Looking at him for a moment*) You do care, after all!

THE MAN—It would be natural, I believe, if I did—for that fact.

THE WOMAN (*standing up*)—Reassuring at least.

THE MAN (*as steps are heard in the hallway*)—Ah, I thought so, still here. Now we shall see—what we shall see.

THE WOMAN (*serious*)—And I would strongly advise you to step behind those curtains for a moment and—

THE MAN (*with a tug in his voice*)—And—

THE WOMAN (*at ease*)—And you will see all you wish—unknown.

THE MAN—You of course don't care whether I am seeable or not. Suppose I remain out!

THE WOMAN (*as steps come nearer her door*)—Suit yourself. I doubt whether it makes much difference now. (*Hesitating*) Still, I really think you'd find it better to follow my advice—at times.

THE MAN (*stepping toward the curtains*)—And this is one of those times, I take it. For once, I'll confess to you, I am interested, and— (*Lowering his voice and stepping behind the curtains.*)

THE WOMAN (*picking up a book and returning to the couch*)—Be patient, and then, when you see who is here, you can do what you please, my good fellow—what you please!

(*The door opens slowly inward and discloses, standing absent-mindedly in the hall, a middle-aged man of fairly pleasing mien and manner, in traveling clothes, coated and hatted, bag in hand.*)

THE OTHER FELLOW—I thought I heard someone with you, dear!

THE WOMAN (*looking up from her book*)—You did!

THE OTHER FELLOW—Yes—I did. Never mind. Someone will drop in to keep you from being too bored—I am sure of it. I've finished the letters.

THE WOMAN (*absent-mindedly, in good imitation*)—Letters!

THE OTHER FELLOW—Those miserable letters—yes; and I am off at once. Sorry, but I probably won't be back till—

THE WOMAN (*showing interest*)—Till—

THE OTHER FELLOW (*as he slowly starts to close the door*)—Till Saturday at least—possibly next week, my dear. You can read another one of Merrick's books. (*With a smile*) Wasn't that the chap who wrote of understanding women? Or if you are real good someone may drop in to keep you company. Good-bye. (*He closes the door softly.*)

THE WOMAN (*as retreating footsteps are heard*)—You may safely come out now, Monseigneur Inquisitor. The way is clear.

THE MAN (*standing in the curtains*)—Yes—he never comes back, except in fiction!

THE WOMAN (*looking at him intently*)—Fiction! (*Laughingly*) Perhaps, dear. Now are you satisfied—manlike?

THE MAN (*with a half-shrug of good nature*)—Yes—now!

THE WOMAN (*not to be put aside too quickly*)—Confess, now that it's all over, that you were rather worried—frankly, rather jealous—about this other fellow!

THE MAN (*mildly provoked*)—But, my dear girl, how should I have known that it was only your husband?



THE SNOWS OF YESTERYEAR

By Richard Le Gallienne

*M*AIS où sont les neiges d'antan? As I transcribe once more that ancient sigh, perhaps the most real sigh in all literature, it is high mid-summer, and the woodland surrounding the little cabin in which I am writing lies in a trance of green and gold, hot and fragrant and dizzy with the whirring of cicadas, under the might of the July sun. Bees buzz in and out through my open door, and sometimes a butterfly flits in, flutters a while about my bookshelves and presently is gone again, in search of sheets more to his taste than those of the Muses, though indeed Catullus is there, with

Songs sweeter than wild honey dripping down,
Which once in Rome to Lesbia he sang.

As I am caught by the dreamy-drowsy spell of the hot murmuring afternoon, and my eyes rest on the thick vines clustering over the rocks, and the lush grasses and innumerable underbrush, so spendthrift in all their crowding luxuriance, I try to imagine the ground as it was but four months ago, still in the grasp of winter, when the tiniest blade of grass or smallest speck of creeping green leaf, seemed like a miracle, and it was impossible to realize that under the broad snowdrifts a million seeds, like hidden treasure, were waiting to reveal their painted jewels to the April winds. Snow was plentiful then, to be had by the ton—but now, the thought suddenly strikes me, and brings home with new illuminating force Villon's old refrain, that though I sought the woodland from end to end, ransacked its most secret places, not one vestige of that snow, so lately here in such plenty, would it be possible to find. Though you were to

offer me a million dollars for as much as would fill the cup of a wild rose, nay, even a hundred million, I should have to see all that money pass me by. I can think of hardly anything else that it couldn't buy—but such a simple thing as last year's snow!

Could there be a more poignant symbol of irreclaimable vanished things than that so happily hit on by the old ballade maker:

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
Save with thus much for an overword—
But where are the snows of yesteryear?

Villon, as we know, has a melancholy fondness for asking those sad hopeless questions of snow and wind. He muses not only of the drift of fair faces, but of the passing of mighty princes and all the arrogant pride and pomp of the earth—"pursuivants, trumpeters, heralds, hey!" "Ah! Where is the doughty Charlemagne?" Even as the humblest, "the wind has carried them all away." They have vanished utterly as the snow, gone—who knows where—on the wind. "Dead and gone"—a sorry burden of the Ballad of Life," as Thomas Lovell Beddoes has it in his "Death's Jest Book." "Dead and gone!" as Mr. Andrew Lang reëchoes in a sweetly mournful ballad:

Through the mad world's scene,
We are drifting on,
To this tune, I ween,
"They are dead and gone!"

"Nought so sweet as melancholy," sings an old poet; and, while the melancholy of the exercise is undoubted, there is at the same time an undeniable charm attaching to those moods of imaginative retrospect in which we summon up

shapes and happenings of the vanished past, a tragic charm indeed similar to that we experience in mournful music or elegiac poetry.

For it is impossible to turn our eyes to any point of the infinite starlit vista of human history without being overwhelmed with a heartbreaking sense of the immense treasure of radiant human lives that has gone to its making, the innumerable dramatic careers now shrunk to a mere mention, the divinely passionate destinies, once all wild dream and dancing blood, now nought but a name huddled with a thousand such in some dusty index, seldom turned to even by the scholar, and as unknown to the world at large as the moss-grown name on some sunken headstone in a country churchyard. What an appallingly exuberant and spendthrift universe it seems, pouring out its multitudinous generations of men and women with the same wasteful hand, as it has filled this woodland with millions of exquisite green lives, marvelously devised, patterned with inexhaustible fancy, mysteriously furnished with subtle organs after their needs, crowned with fairy blossoms and ripening with magic seeds—such a vast treasure of fragrant sunlit leafage, all produced with such elaborate care and long travail, and all so soon to vanish utterly away!

Along with this crushing sense of cosmic prodigality, and somewhat lighting up its melancholy, comes the realization of the splendid spectacle of human achievement, the bewildering array of all the glorious lives that have been lived, of all the glorious happenings under the sun. Ah, what men this world has seen, and—what women! What divine actors have trod this old stage, and in what tremendous dramas have they taken part! And how strange it is, reading of some great dramatic career, of Cæsar, say, or Luther, or Napoleon, or Byron, to realize that there was a time when they were not, then a time when they were beginning to be strange new names in men's ears, then all the romantic excitement of their developing destinies, and the thunder and lightning of the great resounding moments of their lives

—moments made out of real actual prosaic time just as our own moments are made, yet once so splendidly, shinily, on the top of the world, as though to stay there forever, moments so glorious that it would seem that Time must have paused to watch and prolong them, jealous that they should ever pass and give place to lesser moments.

Think, too, of those other fateful moments of history, moments not confined to a few godlike individuals, but participated in by whole nations, such moments as that of the great Armada, the French Revolution or the Declaration of American Independence. How strangely it comes upon one that these past happenings were once only just taking place, just as at the moment of my writing other things are taking place, and clocks were ticking and water flowing, just as they are doing now. How wonderful, it seems to us, to have been alive then, as we are alive now; to have shared in those vast national enthusiasms, "in those great deeds to have had some little part"; and is it not a sort of poor anticlimax for a world that has gone through such noble excitements to have sunk back to this level of every day! Alas! All those lava-like moments of human exaltation—what are they now but, so to say, the pumice stone of history! They have passed as the summer flowers are passing; they are gone with last year's snow.

But the last year's snow of our personal lives—what a wistful business it is, when we get thinking of that! To recall certain magic moments out of the past is to run the risk of making the happiest present seem like a desert; and for most men, I imagine, such retrospect is usually busied with some fair face, or perhaps—being men—with several fair faces, once so near and dear, and now so far. How poignantly and unprofitably real memory can make them—all but bring them back—how vividly reconstruct immortal occasions of happiness that we said could not, must not, pass away, while all the time our hearts were aching with the sure knowledge that they were even then, as we wildly clutched at them, slipping from our grasp.

That summer afternoon—do you, too, still remember it, Miranda?—when under the whispering woodland we ate our lunch together with such prodigious appetite, and oh, such happy laughter, yet never took our eyes from each other; and, when the meal was ended, how we wandered along the streamside down the rocky glen, till we came to an enchanted pool among the boulders, all hushed with moss and ferns and overhanging boughs—do you remember what happened then, Miranda? Ah, nymphs of the forest pools, it is no use asking me to forget.

And all the time my heart was saying to my eyes: "This fairy hour—so real, so magical, now—will some day be in the far past; you will sit right away on the lonely outside of it, and recall it only with the anguish of beautiful vanished things." And here I am today, surely enough, years away from it, solitary on its lonely outside!

I suppose that the river, this summer day, is making the same music along its rocky bed, and the leafy boughs are rustling over that haunted pool just the same as then—but where are the laughing ripples—ah, Miranda—that broke with shy laughter over the divinely troubled water, and the broken reflections, as of startled water lilies, that rocked to and fro in a panic of dazzling alabaster? They are with last year's snow.

Muriel of the solemn eyes, with the heart and the laughter of a child, and a soul like the starlit sky, where should one look for the snows of yesteryear if not in your bosom, fairy girl my eyes shall never see again? Wherever you are, lost to me somewhere among the winding paths of this strange wood of the world, do you ever, as the moonlight falls over the sea, give a thought to that night when we sat together by a window overlooking the ocean, veiled in a haze of moonlit pearl? Dimly seen near shore; a boat was floating, like some mystic barge, as we said, in our happy childishness, waiting to take us to the Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon. Ah, how was it we lingered and lingered till the boat was no more there, and it was

too late? Perhaps it was that we seemed to be already there, as you turned and placed your hand in mine and said: "My life is in your hand." And we both believed it true. Yes, wherever we went together in those days, we were always in that enchanted land—whether we rode side by side through London streets in a hansom—"a two-wheeled heaven" we called it (for our dream stretches as far back as that prehistoric day. How old one of us seems to be growing! You, dear face, can never grow old)—or sat and laughed at clowns in London music halls, or wandered in Surrey lanes, or gazed at each other as if our hearts would break for joy over the snow white napery of some country inn, and maybe quoted Omar to each other, as we drank his red wine to the immortality of our love. Perhaps we were right, after all. Perhaps it could never die, and Time and Distance are perhaps merely illusions, and you and I have never been apart. Who knows but that you are looking over my shoulder as I write, though you seem so far away, lost in that starlit silence that you loved! Ah, Muriel, is it well with you this summer day? A sigh seems to pass through the sunlit grasses. They are waving and whispering as I have seen them waving and whispering over graves.

Such moments as these that I have recalled—or maybe feigned—all men have had in their lives, moments when life seemed to have come to miraculous flower, attained that perfect fulfillment of its promise which else we find only in dreams. Beyond doubt there is something in the flawless blessedness of such moments that links our mortality with super-terrestrial states of being. We do, in very deed, gaze through invisible doors into the ether of eternal existences, and, for the brief hour, live as they, drinking deep of that music of the Infinite which is the divine food of the enfranchised soul. Thence comes our exaltation, and our wild longing to hold the moment forever; for, while it is with us, we have literally escaped from the everyday earth, and have found the way into some other dimension of being, and its passing means our sad return to the

prison house of Time, the place of meetings and partings, of distance and death.

Part of the pang of recalling such moments is a remorseful sense that perhaps we might have held them fast, after all. If only we might bring them back, surely we would find some way to dwell in them forever. They came upon us so suddenly out of heaven, like some dazling bird, and we were so bewildered with the wonder of their coming that we stretched out our hands to seize them, only when they were already spreading their wings for flight. But oh, if the divine bird would only visit us again! What golden nets we would spread for him! What a golden cage of worship we would make ready! Our eyes would never leave his strange plumage, nor would we miss one note of his strange song. But alas, now that we are grown wise and watchful, that "moment eternal" comes to us no more. Perhaps, too, that sad wisdom which has come to us with the years would least of all avail us, should such moments by some magic chance suddenly return. For it is one of the dangers of the retrospective habit that it incapacitates us for the realization of the present hour. Much dwelling on last year's snow will make us forget the summer flowers. Dreaming of fair faces that are gone, we will look with unseeing eyes into the fair faces that companion us still. To the Spring we say: "What of all your blossom, and all your singing? Autumn is already at your heels, like a shadow, and Winter waits for you like a marble tomb." To the hope that still may beckon we say: "Well, what though you be fulfilled, you will pass, like the rest. I shall see you come. We shall dwell together for a while, and then you will go; and all will be as it was before, all as if you had never come at all." For the retrospective mood of necessity begets the anticipatory, we see everything finished before it is begun, and welcome and valediction blend together on our lips. "That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been."

In every kiss sealed fast
To feel the first kiss and forebode the last—

that is the shadow that haunts every joy, and sicklies o'er every action of him whom life has thus taught to look before and after.

Youth is not like that; and therein, for older eyes, lies its tragic pathos. Superficial, or if you prefer it, more normal, observers—are made happy by the spectacle of eager and confident young lives, all abloom and adream, running toward the future with plumed, impatient feet. But for some of us there is nothing quite so sad as young joy. The playing of children is perhaps the most unbearably sad thing in the world. Who can look on young lovers without tears in their eyes? With what innocent faith they are taking in all the lies of life! But perhaps a young mother with her newborn babe on her breast is the most tragical of all pictures of unsuspecting joy, for none of all the trusting sons and daughters of men is destined in the end to find herself so tragically—one might say, cynically—fooled.

Cynically, I said; for indeed sometimes, as one ponders the lavish, heartless use life seems to make of all its divinely precious material—were it but the flowers in one meadow, or the butterflies of a single summer day—it does seem as though a cruel cynicism inhered somewhere in the scheme of things, delighting to destroy and disillusionize, to create loveliness to scatter it to the winds, and inspire joy to mock it with desolation. Sometimes it seems as though the mysterious spirit of life was hardly worthy of the vessels it has called into being, hardly treats them fairly, uses them with an ignoble disdain. For how generously we give ourselves up to life, how innocently we put our trust in it, do its bidding with such fine ardors, striving after beauty and goodness, fain to be heroic and clean of heart—yet "what hath man of all his labor and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath labored under the sun?" Yea, dust and fallen rose leaves and last year's snow.

And yet and yet, for all this drift and dishonored decay of things, that retrospective mood of ours will sometimes take another turn, and, so rare and precious in the memory seem the treasure

that it has lost, and yet in imagination still holds, that it will not resign itself to mortal thoughts of such manifest immortalities.

The snows of yesteryear! Who knows if, after all, they have so utterly vanished as they seem? Who can say but that there may be somewhere in the universe secret treasures where all that has ever been precious is precious still, safely garnered and guarded for us against some wonderful moment which shall gather up for us in one transfiguring apocalypse all the wonderful moments that have but preceded us into eternity? Perhaps, as nothing is lost in the world, so-called, of

matter, nothing is lost, too, in the world of love and dream.

Oh, vanished loveliness of flowers and faces,
Treasure of hair and great immortal eyes,
Are there for these no safe and secret places?
And is it true that beauty never dies?
Soldiers and saints, haughty and lovely names,
Women who set the whole wide world in flames,
Poets who sang their passes to the skies,
And lovers wild and wise:
Fought they and prayed for some poor flitting gleam,
Was all they loved and worshiped but a dream?
Is love a lie and fame indeed a breath,
And is there no sure thing in life—but death?

Ah, perhaps we shall find all such lost and lovely things when we come at length to the Land of Last Year's Snow.



THE MERCHANT ADVENTURERS

By Charles Campbell Jones

NOT by the snap of a flag we swear, not by a salvo's storm,
Not by the lilt of a bugle's blare nor the shine of an uniform;
Not with a nation to back us up do we win what we desire—
Ours is the day-long toilsome march and the lonely midnight fire.

We take our meat from the wilderness, we live by what we win;
We must not halt at the risk we guess, for to halt is the mortal sin;
Paddle and rifle, snowshoe and sledge, we know them at dark and dawn:
They are the soldiers and soldier-priests that march with us on and on.

We do the work of a world of men in the lands where men are few,
We are the captains of Now and Then, and all Past-masters, too;
We win our trade by the dogged strength that all yet nothing lacks,
And civilization is in our debt that we carry her on our backs.



TRUTH crushed to earth will rise again, but a lie, under the same circumstances, doesn't have its anchor fast in the mud, either.



MEN must work and women must weep, but the women seem to get more pleasure out of their end of the job.

August, 1914—7

SUMMER IN TOWN

By Gordon Johnstone

THE sun pours down a flame of torrid ray;
The breeze that came in morning garments white
Has fainted o'er its task to touch the day
With healing kiss to make its burdens light;
The horses reek beneath their hoods of straw,
Blind stricken beasts that plunge like drunken dreams
With belching sides that suck each hot breath o'er
And thirst for dew-washed pastures and cold streams.

A huckster with his wagon wealth of farms
Profanes and sweats; and e'en the mendicant,
Forgetting in his pain his plea for alms,
Hugs some dark alley where the street dogs pant;
A flower girl, soft, olive fleshed and dark,
With face like Raphael's Madonna Saint,
Sighs for the cooling hills of Rome where lark
And linnet voice compassionate complaint.

And staggering, the city seems to swoon,
Dry as the caldron of red Hades' bed,
Parched as the yellow desert at high noon,
Parched as the souls of love uncomforted,
Fuming with pungent breath like some white pit,
With brazen glare that smites wayfaring eyes,
While Titan-like, with flaming armor spit
The hot day totters, reels and gasps and dies.



MISS YELLOWLEAF—I have just broken off my engagement.
MISS CAUSTIQUE—Er—who is the happy man?



LOOK before you leap into the sea of matrimony, but after you have taken the
plunge, keep your eyes shut.



SUGGESTION for a title for a modern book review column—Cruci-fiction.

BICHLORIDE

By George Catton

“IF the coin had fallen heads instead of tails; if Charlie Steamen had not been prejudiced against colored people; if it hadn't been so cold; if the clerk in Holland's drug store at Chena had not been a comedian, or had been an unimaginative old grouch; and if—if—”

My friend, the Gibson House detective, paused suddenly, picked up the little tin box that he kept his collar buttons in, on the mantel, and bringing it over to the table, sat down. I glanced up from the letter he had given me when I came in.

“With reference to what?” I inquired. “Anything to do with this letter of excuses?”

“No, not exactly,” he replied, “though it was that which brought it to mind. I was thinking of the trail a harmless joke sometimes takes—and Nigger Joe.”

I stretched out in the big Morris chair, quite willing to forget my chagrin at learning that the assistant we had secured had lost his man in “a perfect maze of vehicles,” as he said in his letter, and to listen to the “personal experience” my friend was lighting his pipe to tell.

“Nigger Joe called heads,” he began, striking a match on the tobacco jar. “But the coin fell tails! Outside the log shack the fifty-mile gale, right off the polar ice fields, snapped the brittle branches off the trees, swept across the side of the hill with a wail and piled the ‘sugar’ snow in huge drifts against the door; the fire in the rough stone fireplace roared, danced wildly for a moment and flared out into the room. Nigger Joe shrugged his shoulders.

“‘All right,’ he grumbled. ‘I’ll go in the morning. You all make out a list of the things we need, and’—he glanced over at the black bottle that stood in the center of the table—‘and don’t forget the bitters!’

“That was Joe’s only love: bitters. It didn’t matter whether it was whiskey, brandy, beer or peruna so long as there was at least one little kick in a gallon of it. His partners kept him supplied because he couldn’t be persuaded to pack his pick without at least a pint on his hip; then, too, they were not averse to a daily nip themselves. In fact, it was that, more than anything else, that decided them on a trip to Chena, and it was the lowness of the supply that scared Joe into accepting the flip of a coin as a means of deciding who should go. He gloated inwardly—he’d have a glorious spree in Chena before he came back—though he grumbled for appearance’s sake. Charlie Steamen winked slyly at Sam Harris.

“‘I’ll bet he brings gin!’ he joked. ‘I never yet saw a coon that didn’t like his gin.’

“Nigger Joe frowned and felt of the breast pocket of his coat.

“‘Or,’ Charlie added, noticing the action, ‘that didn’t carry a rabbit’s foot for luck.’

“Sam Harris laughed. ‘It’s all right, Joe,’ he said soothingly, slapping the negro on the back. ‘He’s only joshing you. You don’t mind. We three have got along fine so far, and when the sun gets to shining strong again we’ll clean up and get back to God’s country.’

“Nigger Joe picked up his snowshoes and sat down before the fire. ‘We all’s got more’n a million dollars in gold out

of that there hole already,' he whined. 'What for you all want to stay up here in this icebox all winter when the oranges is bloomin' in Californy?'

"Shut up!" roared Charlie—he was born in Fresno. 'I've listened to all that whining I want to hear. You get those old snowboats mended; we want to get to bed.'

"The negro's jaw set itself viciously but he made no reply. It took him two hours to restrung the breaks in his snowshoes, and when he finally got up and banked the fire the other men were snoring loudly.

"When Joe got up in the morning he was angrier than when he lay down; half the night he had lain awake, thinking things over, and at breakfast he didn't say a word. He was so angry he wouldn't even accept a drink of the half-cupful of whiskey that remained in the black bottle.

"Better drink it, Joe,' Sam advised him. 'It's thirty-four below nothing, and you've got a long drill ahead of you.' But Joe only shook his head. 'Yes' and 'No' were all they could get out of him all the time he was packing his grub for the trip, but when they opened the door for him and he had climbed out on the snow, he turned on Charlie.

"Hurry back!" he snarled. 'You all telling me not to be gone more'n six days, when it's two hundred and ten miles there and back and the snow like cornmeal! What you all think I be, a husky or a ostrich?'

"Charlie walked outside. 'That will be about all,' he rasped warningly. 'Get started; we'll be lonesome till you get back.'

"Joe stared at him for a moment, his eyes snapping, the muscles of his jaw working with rage and suppressed 'language,' then, jerking his parka's hood down with a grunt, he whirled around, and with long swinging strides started down the hill. That was the nearest the negro and the white man ever came to mixing.

"Sam Harris closed the door. 'He's mad, Charlie,' he laughed.

"Mad! When Joe refuses to drink whiskey he's madder'n a hatter, or'—

He shrugged his shoulders. 'Puh! What difference does it make?'

"Sam walked over to the table. 'But really, Charlie,' he said quietly, 'you shouldn't call him nigger; he's a man just the same as you and I.'

"Charlie's face flamed. 'The same as you, maybe,' he roared, 'but leave me out!'

"Sam opened his mouth to reply, then he thought better of it, with Charlie's mind in such a state. He lifted the black bottle and held it against the light as if estimating the quantity.

"There's just about one good drink left,' he judged. 'Suppose we—'

"Charlie took a quick step forward. 'Suppose we what?' he interrupted angrily. 'Say, whose whiskey is that? Who toted those six bottles of poison up here, you or I? It will be me, not you, that takes care of that bottle!'

"The surprised look in Sam's face gradually gave way to a deep flush of anger. He put the bottle down in the center of the table.

"Take a good look at me again, Charlie,' he drawled. 'Is my face black like Joe's?'

"Charlie's eyes narrowed to slits. 'Well?' he asked meaningly.

"Just something to remember, Charlie!'

"Well?' Charlie repeated, and took a step nearer the table. Sam walked around and faced his partner.

"I was going to say—' he began evenly.

"Don't say it!'

"Sam's hands clenched themselves at his sides. 'I was going to say—'

"Smuck! Charlie Steamen's fist leaped the space between them. Sam's head rocked. They clinched."

My friend the detective pulled the tobacco jar over toward him and began leisurely to refill his pipe. It was his old trick of taking you to the yawning hole and then allowing you to catch your breath before he shoved you in.

"Well?" I asked impatiently. "Which won?"

He drew a match across the top of the little tin box.

"Down the hill"—puff, puff—"a mile

away"—puff, puff—"Nigger Joe sat by a fire he had built and cursed to himself," he went on, lighting his pipe. "He never intended to go to Chena."

"Which won?" I demanded. "Charlie or Sam?"

My friend frowned. "They fought for nearly two hours all over the shack," he replied. "Face to face, legs locked, backward and forward they rolled and struggled on the hard earth floor. With flaming faces and snarling curses and eyes vicious with animal hatred they twisted and heaved and panted. First one and then the other would tear an arm free and swing it back to drive the heavy knotted fist into the other's features, till, with their clothes in tatters and their faces past any semblance to human scenery, they fell apart from sheer exhaustion and lay gasping on the floor."

"Then neither won!" I said disappointedly. He frowned again.

"Nigger Joe sat by a fire and cursed to himself," he replied shortly. "He never intended going to Chena." I apologized. After all, it was he that was telling the story, not I. He put the little tin box on the top of the tobacco jar.

"'You all call me a nigger,' Joe yawned sleepily," he went on. "You all think I'm going to Chena with about fifty dollars. Pshaw—that won't buy two quarts. No, sir! White man, when I goes to Chena I'se going to take that million dollars with me and buy the whole barrel!" Nigger Joe yawned again.

"'I'm going to buy two barrels!' he muttered, rubbing his eyes, 'and then I'll be drunk for a whole year—maybe two—maybe—' Nigger Joe slept."

My friend picked up the little tin box and rattled the contents close to his ear.

"When Sam and Charlie had recovered enough strength to get up, they washed in silence. They sat around all day without saying a word to each other; and, though they ate together at the table, neither would touch the black bottle. Sam Harris turned in at nine that night; an hour later Charlie banked the fire, took off his boots and coat and

lay down on the bunk on the opposite side of the room. That day set the stage.

"They never varied a minute in their individual habits for the next two months. In the morning they would get up together, eat their breakfast together, and if the weather permitted climb the hill together to look at the 'pocket' they had been working.

"It was just as though they were deaf and dumb; as though neither was aware of the presence of the other. Only when one would sit and look at the black bottle standing in the center of the table would his partner look at him; then storm clouds would edge up on the horizon of the silence and both would turn away to study, self-consciously, something else in the room. And Nigger Joe never came back!

"One morning, as if by agreement, they turned down the hill instead of up toward the 'workhouse,' as Joe had contrarily christened it. Just where was Joe? That was the question in the minds of both. Had he arrived at Chena and drunk himself to death? Or—The weather would be changing in a few days and there was a lot of gold yet to be taken out before they could start back.

"They swung around a pile of rock at the foot of the hill and stopped abruptly. At their feet, beside the ashes of a fire long cold, sat Nigger Joe. Huddled up, his head on his arms, his arms on his knees, he had died, and an ermine had made rags of his trouser legs. Sam Harris looked Charlie Steamen straight in the eyes; it cost a lot to speak after all those weeks of silence.

"'What killed him, Charlie?' he asked quietly.

"Charlie reached down, and pushing his hand beneath the negro's solidly frozen head, pulled a tin box out of his breast pocket and handed it to Sam.

"'Bichloride of mercury,' he replied evenly. 'Read the label.'

"Sam slipped the box into his pocket without looking at it.

"'Suicide?' he questioned.

"'No.' Charlie's eyes narrowed to slits. 'I gave it to him. The night before he left, when he thought we were

asleep, he put two of those pills in the black bottle; that's why he refused to take a drink before he left, and the reason I interrupted you that morning when you started to say we'd split what was left of the whiskey. So when he got in bed and began to snore, I took the box out of his pocket and put two more of those pills in his flask of condensed coffee.'

"Sam's hands clenched themselves at his sides.

"I wasn't going to say we'd split the whiskey,' he said. 'What I started to say was that we'd ask Joe to drink it when he came back. I saw him put the pills in the black bottle myself.'"

The detective picked up the little tin box again.

"And if the coin had fallen heads instead of tails," I said, "Joe would not have gone, and so would not have tampered with the whiskey?"

"That's one If."

"And if Charlie had not been so prejudiced against colored people—"

He took the lid off the little tin box, and fishing around among the collar buttons, passed me a copper cent. I held it over to the light.

"Why," I exclaimed in surprise, "it's a counterfeit! It's got tails on both sides!"

He nodded his head. "Charlie wouldn't have played such a trick on a white man. He was always square from his own peculiar viewpoint with white men."

"And if—" I started to ask.

"If the drug clerk at Chena hadn't been a comedian?" he finished for me. "That is where the joke started on its trail." He replaced the coin in the little tin box.

"Sam Harris had his prejudices, too. He didn't feel that he could live in the

same little room with a 'snake,' so he split the 'million dollars'—as Joe had called it—and packing up at once, rushed into Chena.

"Holland's drug store was the only one between Atwood and Fairbanks. Nigger Joe must have bought the bichloride there. Sam questioned the clerk. The clerk laughed.

"Nigger Joe came in last summer and asked me for ten dollars' worth of the poison,' he replied. 'Not having any in the store, I gave him ague pills for a joke, and he didn't know the difference.'"

"So if the drug clerk hadn't joked, Nigger Joe wouldn't have thought he had bichloride of mercury, and so wouldn't have thought of poisoning the whiskey?"

My friend nodded his head again. "And the drug clerk's joke wouldn't have started on the trail," he added.

"And how did you come by the box?" That question had been on the tip of my tongue ever since he described the fight in the shack.

My friend smiled.

"I slipped it in my pocket when Charlie handed it to me over Joe's body when we found him," he said.

An hour later, in the barroom downstairs, I thought of something. Turning to my friend, I asked him:

"What did Nigger Joe die of?"

He smiled amusedly. "Fell asleep in the snow and froze to death," he replied. "So when you write to that assistant of ours, tell him to stay in Chicago till he locates his man again and gets his address. I've been hunting him for eight years." He leaned over and whispered in my ear.

"It might be good news, you know, for a man to learn that he didn't kill another man when he thought he did!"



PITY may be akin to love on its mother's side, but its father's name is contempt.

THE TOSS-UP

By the Author of "Mastering Flame"

HE stood looking down into the black water. A policeman, strolling past, stopped and looked at him. It was the hackneyed situation: at two o'clock in the morning, on a lonely bridge. It was the usual thing, following the usual set of circumstances—one of the usual sets, anyhow: the beautiful wife, the husband considerably older, the young and fatally attractive "best friend"—a triangle making finally for the usual discovery—and now this. For of course it was the husband who stood looking down into the dark water and—wondering. He alone was unusual, and what he wondered: "It'll come to the same thing, so inevitably, in the end, whichever of the moves leads up to it. Humph!" He felt in his pocket. "As logical a way to decide as any other—heads, I stay on the board a little longer; tails, I—am put back into the box." A whimsical, grim smile was on his lips as he tossed up the coin.

HEADS

He picked up the coin rather carefully, put it back in his pocket, and with a polite "Good night" to the policeman—who was staring at him stupidly—left the bridge and walked rapidly to his house. Lights still blazed in the drawing room; he left his coat and hat in the hall and went in.

"Richard!" It was more a moan than a cry, that came from the woman crouched before the fire.

"You are still up, Hélène?" His voice, as he went over to her, held only courteous surprise.

"Of course I am up—what did you expect? Did you think I could—

Richard, for pity, do not insist on your eternal finesse now! For once—at last—consent to look at things as they are; as now," she added draggingly, "you know them to be."

He looked at the jewels on her quivering throat rather than at her face. "As now—I know them to be," he said, sittin' down a little slowly. "Well, Hélène?"

"You must have guessed—oh, I think you knew before this," she began disjointedly. "Noel has been here too much for you, with all your subtlety, not to have seen. Tonight must simply have confirmed what already you *had* seen, long ago."

The man cleared his throat. "I am afraid you lay too much stress on that subtlety of mine. I assure you I was quite as surprised as the stupidest; and for the stupidest's reason: Noel was my friend, and you—were my wife."

"Oh, I know." For a moment she covered her eyes; then faced him defiantly. "But you—you can't know," she declared, with a flare of passion, "what it was for me, with you always shut up with those books, or going with me into the world, only to smile at it—that cruel smile of yours, that seemed invariably to include me—"

"Hélène! If ever I smiled at you," he said, in a different voice, "it was not cruelly. If I smiled, it was at your youth."

"And Noel," she went on, hardly hearing him, "loved just to live. He was simple and gay and—"

"And young," finished the man, gazing into the fire.

"Yes"—she flushed softly—"young. All the things that—" She broke off

abruptly. "I used to wonder at your having chosen him for a friend, as I wondered at your having chosen me for a wife."

His laugh sounded mirthless. "Seemed incongruous, didn't it? Perhaps"—his brilliant eyes rested on her lovely head for an instant—"I am incongruous—in patches."

She said, with a tremor of compunction: "You are good. You've been good—wonderfully good—to me. And I'm not telling you all this to belittle what you've been—oh, don't think that! I'm trying just to—explain, that's all. You were willing to marry me, though I didn't love you, and—"

"And I've got my just deserts, eh? Well"—with that short laugh again—"I rather think so, myself."

"No, no—I didn't mean— Oh, Richard," despairing, "why will you never understand?"

"Perhaps," he said deliberately, "because I understand too well. My dear Hélène," he went on, under her baffled glance, "you have put it very clearly; let us look at things as they are. You find yourself married to an old man, in love with a young one; I, having possessed a young wife and a young friend, find myself in possession of neither. A disillusioning predicament for both of us, but—"

"Oh," she cried, beating her slender hands together, "how can you? I knew that you were hard, but that you were callous—cynical— Richard, what makes you take it like this?"

"Age," said he succinctly, and looking very steadily into the tragic young eyes. "Euphemists, of whom I am one, call it philosophy; but its real name is age. You are right in shrinking from it—though it will save you, too, as it destroys you—that is its essence."

"I do not understand you," murmured the girl—she was scarcely more than that.

"Of course you don't!" He leaned forward to stir the fire to a brisk flame. "You expected me, when I left this room, to rush back into it with a pistol—for one or both, or all three of us; instead, I come back after an hour and a half with

—philosophy. Not even," he added distinctly, "talk of divorce."

"But you will divorce me?" She sat straight, two vivid spots in her clear cheeks. "Of course you'll divorce me, and then—"

"And then you'd marry Noel?" The smile she hated flitted across his face, leaving it more impassively grim than before. "It's obvious, isn't it? Too obvious," said the philosopher, "even to happen. No, Hélène, I shall not divorce you."

"Ah!"

At the sharp little sound, his fingers went up to rest against his lips for a moment. Then he said, almost lightly: "So that—obviously, again—you won't marry Noel. Unless you can find some legally acceptable reason for divorcing me."

She sprang to all her slender height. She was ghostly pale, and her words, as they rained down at him, stumbled, slurred with her storm. "You won't? You won't divorce me? You'll force me to live on here with you, knowing what you do, and I knowing that you know? You'll keep me chained to you, like a prisoner—to gloat over my humiliation, my crying out? No, no, no!" Her passion fled suddenly; she sank down in her chair. "You may be hard, but you're not a monster. You'll never do that—Richard."

He shrugged. His hands, that she could not see, within his pockets, clenched until the tendons stood out white. "We are inevitably prisoners—to someone," said he; "I—haven't you in the past found me a fairly considerate jailer?"

She gave one look at his rigid face; then all her youth, her delicate grace, the gleaming jewels and the exquisite gown crumpled—into a piteous, shaking mass. She sobbed aloud.

The man rose, without touching her; walked to the further end of the room. "You see"—his voice had again that curious light quality, the thin timbre of a silken string strained to breaking point—"I'm a consistent monster. If I were going to free you, I should choose a less imperfect method than divorce. As I'm

not going to free you, I let you feel your chains at once, in their full bitterness. But"—he muttered, not looking toward the beautiful bowed head—"rest assured of one thing: within the prison house you are dictator—I'll not intrude. Good night."

No sound came from the brilliant, huddled figure by the hearth. The woman's sobs had ceased, violently, like all of her. But she who gazed after him, as he went out, was no longer a girl. He would not divorce her, but—

She took from among her rings a gold circlet, and let it slip into the fire.

It was a year since the night he had stood looking down at the dark water. Now the man who sat opposite her by the fire was fair and boyishly tall and lithe. A boy's gloom was on his brow, and he spoke with the somber finality of twenty-nine.

"It's no good—there's nothing to be done."

"No," said the woman, with a sort of numb hopelessness.

"I've got to clear out."

"Noel!"

"Well," with a shade of irritability in his bitterness, "you must see there's nothing else—my God, do you think I can go on seeing you like this indefinitely? With him forever looking over our shoulder! Even when he's not there, he seems to be."

"Ah!" She gave a little cry. "You feel it, too—that eternal mocking smile of his! It's as though"—she looked about her, shivering—"he had passed into the very chairs and tables, by the mere power of his will. His will—it never slackens for an instant."

"No, and I can't stand up under it any longer," declared Noel passionately. "I tell you, I've got to clear out. Maybe, when I've gone, he'll give you some peace—"

"Oh, he gives me peace enough," she said drearily, "when you aren't here—except for that constant presence of his, in everything. Noel, Noel"—in a burst of terror, she stood up—"don't go away! For heaven's sake, stay by me—at any

rate, stay near. Without you I don't know what I'd—"

"No"—he shook his head obstinately—"I've got to go. You don't understand—it's to force me to go that he's doing all this; it's his way of beating me at my own game. Well," savagely, "he's beaten me. He's proved the value of his cursed finesse—for once."

"Noel!" She sank down into her chair, her very lips white.

"Yes." He seemed to take a primitive pleasure in wreaking his own bitterness on the creature nearest him. "He's succeeded, at the exquisite revenge it took *him* to concoct. Where is there another man who'd have hit on such a scheme? The only thing that can ever beat his brain will be death; and," he added harshly, "even He won't dare come at him, till He's disposed of you and me first."

The woman's face hardened curiously. "Yes," she said, her slow eyes of despair gaining a certain light, "if—he would die—"

"He won't," returned the other man shortly. "It isn't in his plan. And"—was a tinge of relief in the black resentment of his voice?—"since we can't frustrate his plan, the only thing to do is to succumb to it. I'll go away, tonight."

She drew a swift breath, caught his arm. "Where will you go? Where? Oh, Noel, you can't!"

His hands closed round her wrists convulsively; but at the same time he said: "I'll go to Africa—the East—anywhere! Only to escape those watchful, *knowing* eyes—that smile—God!"

She rose, in the wonderful allure of her delicate slenderness. "And I?" she said in a low voice, swaying toward him. "I, Noel?"

He leapt up, crushed her between his turbulent arms. "You—Hélène," he murmured unevenly, "I'll never forget you for an hour, for a minute! You'll always be the only woman I—"

Her lips, under his, smiled poignantly. She stirred, in the arms that were young arms; for she knew more of youth, since she had begun to leave it. "At least you will think of me," she murmured, her hands stealing up to his hair, "some-

times. And the thought will grow to lose its cruelty. The memory of Richard will fade, and of this terrible year; and you will think—just of me. Ah, Noel, you will?"

"My beloved!" He kissed her eyes and her white arms, and then her lips—over and over. "Shall I think of you! Hélène, Hélène, I can't give you up! It's no use. I—but I must," he cried, conscious, in the midst of his passion, of a silent sinister presence. "It's too much for me—I must!"

"Yes—you must," she agreed now dully. "Good-bye, Noel."

He held her for a moment longer, of tumult, of furious rebellion. Then, with a stifled cry, and a last wild pressure of her lips, he was gone.

She stood in the empty room; staring after him: youth, who had closed the door, altogether. In his place, stole in—wraithlike, mocking—knowledge; to whisper, "You have me now."

She recognized *him*; and her eyes, traveling to her bare left hand, froze. "If he would die," she said slowly—"if he had died, a year ago—"

She had not heard the door open again; but she felt upon her his negative, grim smile.

TAILS

It was a year since the night he had stood looking down at the dark water. The woman who had been his wife watched Noel, who had been his friend, come into the room, a confusion of expressions in her face.

"Hélène!" He made as though to take her in his arms; then, meeting her eyes, thought better of it, and kissed her hand, reddening ever so little.

"So you are back!" Her smile rested upon him, involuntarily yearning, involuntarily fearful too, as he sat down. "You were gone a long time."

"Yes—well, I thought"—he stretched his long limbs a bit uncomfortably—"you'd be glad to have a little time to get over it. It was a nasty business. I myself was all smashed up by it."

"Were you?" She looked at him rather steadily for a moment. "You

didn't come to see me before you left," she said. "You did not come—afterward—at all."

"No, I—you see"—he laughed a little, nervously—"that sort of thing, the—er—details and everything—knocks me all out. And coming with old Dick—and just when it did—"

"Yes," she said, her hands in the lap of her white gown suddenly locking together, "coming just when it did—"

"Well, it knocked me all out," he repeated, with a deep breath. "I had to get away."

"I see." Her glance continued to rest on him. "So you went to Japan. In your letters," she went on, casually, "you didn't mention having met the De Tregers."

"Oh"—he looked up quickly—"you've seen them then?"

"I've seen Elise."

"Um—very nice girl," he observed unenthusiastically; "a shade thin, perhaps"—his eyes were fixed appreciatively on the soft curve of the woman's throat—"but—a very nice girl."

"Are you engaged to her?" asked the woman distinctly.

He gave an impatient exclamation. "So it's that that's making you so queer! My dear girl, if you take up every piece of gossip that's floating about—why," teasingly, "you yourself haven't entirely escaped the sly whispers, you know."

She flushed, even to the warm white of her slender neck, but spoke with that same controlled composure. "She—Elise—told me you were engaged to her. She said you—"

"Hélène!" The man sprang up, exasperated. "And what if she did?" he demanded. "Don't you know that there are girls who, the moment one says a pretty speech to them, or flirts the most harmless bit, fancy one's leading 'em to the altar? If that's all you're reproaching me for—"

"I"—a slight smile passed over her lips—"I am not reproaching you. I am only trying—but you will not let me—to congratulate you. You see, Elise showed me her ring—she was very pretty, in her eagerness to let me into her secret—and

I think, Noel, it must be more than a harmless bit of flirtation, which—"

"Now, listen"—he sat down, evidently with an effort curbing his impatience: "I admit I've been foolish. I was alone out there, and—and all smashed up—"

"Yes"—her faint smile, recurring, reminded him of someone—"you've said that."

"And the girl saw it, and *she* was sympathetic," he cried injuredly. "And perhaps I did respond rather more unrestrainedly than I should have; perhaps I did lead her to think—"

"You led her," said the woman who had loved him, "to think that you loved her. She thinks so now. And"—a last glimmer of hope rose to her eyes—"you do?"

"Of course I don't!" He leaned toward her, utterly mistaking her wistfulness. "Well, rather not!" with an uneven laugh, catching her hands. "Hélène, Hélène, I love only you! I always have loved you—your wonderful hair, and your eyes, and your mouth—"

"Yes!" She sat free of him, before he could kiss her. "That is what you loved: my hair and eyes and mouth." Her voice lowered. "Until a year ago, it was all there was of me to love. Except perhaps—youth. One might"—an odd little gleam came into her eye—"have loved me for that."

The man said, restively: "I haven't the least notion what you're talking about. But I do think you might come down off your dignity, and be sweet—this first evening I'm home. If it's only that absurd episode with the little girl that's bothering you—Look here," impulsively, "I'll break with her tomorrow."

She turned, to look directly into his eyes. "I hope you will. It's the best thing—the one thing—you can do for her. But first, tonight—"

"Yes"—he leaned to her again, ardently—"tonight?"

"You must say good-bye to me," the woman said steadily. "That, too, is the one thing—for us both."

"Hélène!" He was beside her, indig-

nant. "Do you mean you don't love me?" incredulously.

"Yes, Noel"—she looked up into the variable face, that she had loved, with a certain sad tenderness—"I mean just that."

"I don't believe it!" He marched over to the fire, and stood regarding her from there, domineeringly. "You're only piqued and—Why, last year you were ready to give me your life. You—"

"And instead," she broke in, strangely, "Richard gave us both his life. Do you ever think of that, Noel?"

"Of course," he muttered; "I tell you, it smashed me all—"

"Yes—but when you got over being smashed—didn't you ever *think* about it? Didn't it come," she asked slowly, "to stand for something to you?"

"Er—well, I thought it was confounded white of old Dick. I thought"—he shifted uneasily, from one carefully shod foot to the other—"it was just like his confounded head, to see that there was only one solution, and then—to bring it about."

"Yes," she echoed, lifelessly, "then—to bring it about. If he had lived—"

"Oh, if he'd lived"—Noel shrugged, significantly—"there'd have been, as he jolly well knew, the muck of divorce and all that. He was a proud beggar, old Dick; he preferred to settle it as he did."

"Yes," she repeated, in that same numb monotone, "he was proud. He preferred to settle it—*like that*."

"Look here, Hélène"—the man wheeled suddenly—"you aren't actually imagining you were in love with him? At this stage of the game! You aren't as sentimental as that?"

The woman, in her white gown, stood up. "No," she said quietly, "I wasn't in love with him. I didn't even know him. But I am coming to know him"—a curious light swept her face—"now; and perhaps—perhaps what he gave wasn't in vain, after all."

"Of course it wasn't." The man drew a breath of relief. "You'll see—everything's coming out wonderfully!" he declared, coming over to her, with a swift stride. "Lord, sweetheart, you

gave me a turn just now—but," quickly, "I knew it was something like that—some foolish scruple of remorse or—" His face hardened, as she turned from his eager arms. "You won't?"

"No—oh, no, no!" She looked at him, almost with a shudder. "Don't you understand? That's all gone—finished, forever. I've tried to make you see, but it's evidently no use. You'd better go, Noel."

"Oh," he cried, hotly, "I'll go! I'll go, and I'll go straight to Elise De Treger. But don't think," gazing down at her furiously, "that I'm to be whistled back! This is irrevocable."

That faint smile touched her lips again. He knew now of whom the smile reminded him: Dick. "It is," she agreed, thoughtfully, "irrevocable. Good-bye, Noel."

But instead of taking the hand she held out, his arms held her pinioned, in a grip of steel. He looked at her, as she lay there, apathetic, against his breast: at the exquisite grace and color of her, but—more maddening still—the new softness of her womanhood, its subtle mystery. And he told her thickly:

"Very well—good-bye. Only, remember: you can send me away; you can call back Dick, or whomever you like, to take my place—ghost or man; but you can't," exultantly, "call back what I've had of you—to give to any man! I've had your first real love—your youth—it'll be mine, though you live a hundred years; and you can never get it back."

She felt his savagely triumphant lips draining her own, in a last merciless kiss. Then he was gone.

And she stood, staring at the door he had closed; of her youth, it was true, of her first unreasoning, blind passion. What had come to take its place? Her eyes crept to her left hand, to a ring, made of a small coin set like a man's seal—the coin that had been shut within *his* hand, when—

Her face grew pinched, colorless. "If he were alive," she said, straining her eyes into the shadows of the empty room—"if, a year ago, he had gone on living—"

Out of the shadows came silence. But then—she was slowly aware of it, and with a strange sense of comfort—his grim, understanding smile.



SHIPMATES

By Witter Bynner

A NIGHT on the cabin roof, in a room
 Reaching to Zanzibar,
 With shipmates two, a shrouded boom
 And a masthead fumbling from star to star,
 Is a night on the roof of a little world
 Which unrecorded tides have driven . . .
 And the dead are comfortably furled—
 And the living catch at heaven.



SILENCE—The college yell of the school of experience.

CASTLES IN THE AIR

By Tarleton Collier

EFFIE WILSON'S world was a dreary sort of a place. It was a world in which no Melba or Scotti lived, and where "grand opera" was a term without meaning; where there had never been a band concert, nor any of that bewitching melody which comes of ten thousand happy voices and ten score orchestras at the public parks of the big city in which Effie lived. Effie had never heard a person laugh; and although she was a dear little person, with curls and a dimple and the brightest of smiles, no one had ever made love to her. When a pretty girl reaches the age of twenty without that experience, something is wrong with her or with the universe. And so it was in this case: Effie was deaf and dumb from birth.

Most pathetic of tragedies is that in which a person moves, conscious that it is he against whom life has been hardest, but resolving to have the little of brightness that is left, and to be glad. And Effie was one of these persons who knew: a pitiful figure, with all her smiles and dimples and curls.

Every person in the Cloverwood station was attracted by the trim little figure in a tan linen dress one morning in early June. From her flower basket hat to her round, silk-clad ankle and tiny tan pumps, there was that appearance of freshness, exquisiteness and harmony which is the world's demand of woman. And from under the low-hanging hat peeped the brightest and cheeriest of faces.

Irresistibly the glances of men and women went toward her. Men forgot the sporting columns in watching the little figure. The hearts of the waiting

passengers warmed toward Effie Wilson in the Cloverwood station that morning.

The girl was with her father and mother and three others: a man and two women. Her companions were singularly alike in the respect of a common blankness, almost stupidity, of expression. The people in the waiting room recognized it as the characteristic of deaf mutes, for they perceived interchanges of gestures, which they knew as sign language.

Strangely, they did not identify the girl as one of the group of mutes, although she sat with them on the long bench. But when two small boys, who were wrestling, slipped and fell on the smooth tiled floor, she touched the arm of the woman who sat on one side of her, and laughed. Then they knew; it was a high, uninflected, uncanny shout, rather than a laugh; it was plainly the utterance of one who had never heard a laugh that betokens real mirth and enjoyment of life; it was a laugh like that of the others who sat there, blank of faces, nimble of hands—the laugh of a deaf mute.

They pitied; the sudden realization of affliction in one in whom they had taken a personal interest rendered greater the shock. But the girl, unconscious of herself and of their regard, glanced busily around, cheery, bright, happy of countenance.

Her glance settled for the space of a minute on a tall young man who stood before the ticket seller's window. He was clad in the most conventional of summer clothes—straw hat, blue serge, tan shoes. But blue serge was Effie's ideal of desirable manly raiment, and she looked. At first she saw only a

broad back; then the man turned, and she saw a youthful face that plainly was made to smile, a face that combined the physical essences of good companionship and of good sense. In all, it was a very pleasing face, and Effie realized that this was the kind of a man that she would like to know. Not that she had fixed a type or ideal; with all her superficial simplicity, Effie was wise enough to know that she must not dream. She had dreamed, now and then, when she first began to read, and she found that her life could be very miserable if she allowed it. Thereupon she had rigidly schooled herself not to think of what she would like to be or to have. But now, as she looked at the tall young man, there came an involuntary pang. She did not know why, exactly; she knew that here before her was a young man who apparently had nothing to ask of the world, and that she, a young woman, was deaf and dumb. She had never looked with interest at a man before; now—oh, well, it must be that blue serge that fitted so well.

She watched him as he, glancing around, smiled in the direction of her bench, and as he came, with hand outstretched, toward her father, who sat by her side, Effie started, when she saw him greet her father in the familiar sign language. A mute? That admirable young person? With the curiosity of a child, she stared at him. Easily, he continued the conversation of gestures, and she decided that he could be nothing else but one like herself.

Effie had never pitied herself, but her heart went out to the young man; she saw in him perfection deprived of opportunity and of full pleasures. But it is hard to sustain sympathy with a person whose condition is identical with your own; so with Effie, whose pity became interest. She sidled closer to her father and slipped her hand under his arm. The stranger would see; ah, he did, and as he looked in her wide eyes, he smiled, as the others had, at the daintiness of her. Effie's heart gave a throb, and she looked away.

Effie wished that she knew him; she knew nobody. There were father and

mother, who loved her, and who cried now and then when they hugged her; there was Terry, the deaf and dumb man who came to their house often; there were Mr. Simpson, and Mary and Mrs. Dardell—all like herself. But none of them looked especially pleasing in blue serge, or otherwise, and none of them looked as if they could pick her up and carry her away off, and make her glad that they did. And, she remembered, they were all timid, and always seemed to shrink from some unknown terror. The man in blue serge was afraid of nothing, because he looked good and smiled.

And to think that he was one like herself!

She caught her father spelling out her name on his fingers. The young man nodded to her and smiled again. In her childish manner, he smiled back, snuggled closer to her father, and motioned the young man to the seat beside her.

Effie was untutored, natural, in many ways a child still. And when she put her hand in the young man's, it meant nothing but that she understood, and was sorry, and that they were alike. It was strange, she thought, that the young man should change color and glance askance at her father; but Mr. Wilson was indifferent, and the man held her hand lightly for a minute or two. The train for which they had been waiting rolled into the shed, and there was a rush for seats.

She found one across from her father and mother. The man in blue serge came in; she was watching for him, and she nodded toward him. He raised his hat. He was about to pass by, and a fear seized her. She clutched her skirts, and moved over to the wall, into the smallest possible space. It was the most obvious of invitations. The man seemed to hesitate. Then he sat down beside her, and she smiled into his eyes so gayly and unaffectedly that a sober look on his face melted into an answering smile.

"We are going on a picnic," she spelled on her fingers. There seemed no answer to be made, and after a pause, she spelled.

"We are going to Lake Monroe."

For ten minutes there was a continuance of the simple conversation. Her name, her father's, her mother's, Terry's and those of the other two, she told him. She asked his, and he spelled it for her: "Frederick Washburn Clarke."

Effie was having the time of her life. She had never experienced anything like this before. It was new to be riding, side by side and lightly in contact with a young man who was big and good looking and brave—she knew that he was brave and good; to be conversing with him was wonderful. And he was one like her!

She fell to picking out with a pin the letters of his name on a newspaper.

He was going to the city, he had told her. She was going beyond, ten miles, to the lake. When the factory stacks and the multiplicity of rails told her that they were nearing the city, her heart grew heavy. When she saw him look to his suitcase and fold his newspaper, a sudden impulse nerved her. She took a pencil from her satchel, and wrote on the edge of his paper: "1005 Cloverwood Avenue. Come sometimes."

He shook her hand as he rose, and the memory of her big eyes, unsmiling for once, as he saw them then, haunted him for a long time after.

She leaned out of the window, and watched him. As he stepped from the coach to the platform and turned away, she saw a man come behind him, and touch him on the shoulder. He turned. He smiled, and then, plainly, unmistakably, he spoke to the newcomer and laughed.

The two walked off together; they passed directly under her window, and she saw the young man in the blue serge engaged in the most animated of conversations. He was talking—she saw it. As he passed under her window, he did not look up, but went on into the station, his arm around the shoulder of the man to whom he was talking.

The train filled with passengers. The man who took the seat which the blue serge man had left was startled from his newspaper by the sight of a tear that trickled down Effie's face and fell on her hand.



IN A GARDEN

By David Morton

WHO knows—who knows
But in this perfect place
Of peace, of parting's pain,
Where I have touched your lips, your face—
Who knows
But we shall come again:
You as the thirsting Rose,
And I—the Rain!



WE act as though comfort and luxury were the chief requirements of life, when all we need to make us really happy is something to be enthusiastic about.

THE BAREFOOT BOY

By Hildegard Hawthorne

WHAT has become of that great American asset, the barefoot boy? Time was when he was plentiful as the blackberries with whose juice his jolly face was usually liberally tinted. Generally there was a rag wrapped around at least one of his toes, while his brown legs bore an inextricable pattern of scratches. He belonged intimately in the country landscape, appearing toward the end of April and enduring well into October. On Sundays he vanished, giving place to an unhappy creature in a collar and tie and coat, with creaking shoes and ribbed stockings.

He was essential America! Growing up, as full as ever of both health and dreams, he started in to do the big things that waited everywhere to be done. If he grew into shoes, he was at least always ready to take off his coat to the job in hand. He had been too close to the earth to be ashamed of work, too near to nature to be unconscious of divinity. He could plow a field or lead an army, and his heart was the heart of a child, whatever the shrewdness or far-sightedness of his brain.

Has America lost him?

There are boys still to be seen in the country lanes and in the farmhouses, boys trudging to the schoolhouse over the hill, boys playing ball in the corner lot, boys doing many things in considerable numbers—but all of them wearing shoes and stockings.

To be sure, the barefoot boy still exists here and there, but no longer as in his heyday. He appears conscious of shoes even when he doesn't wear them, has a look of guilty bareness, and his legs are suspiciously white. Somehow you don't believe in him.

What is at the bottom of his extinction? Is it advancing prosperity, or the fear of lockjaw? Do the country papers advertise shoes and stockings so alluringly as to entrap his guileless youth? Has he lost his old love of dewy fields and sun-warmed roads, the feel of pine needles under foot, the desperate daring of a run across stubble?

And what are we to do without him? At present half the middle-aged men you know, and the better half, were once he. Think of a generation not one of whom can begin a reminiscence with the ideal opening, "When I was a barefoot boy"! Think of losing all that gipsy joy out of life, that sense of freedom, that tang of the eternal pagan!

Perhaps he hasn't really disappeared, and all this may be a too hasty generalization, based, as it is, on no more than a brief trip through haunts that used to know him. But if he is becoming rare, no efforts should be spared to restock the country with him. For not only is he too valuable a future citizen to be lost to the race, but too much happiness would be extinguished with his passing. This I know, because I—well, not quite, but I did what I could. I was at least a barefoot girl!

DEATH THE MATCHMAKER

By Paul Hervey Fox

"G. H. RIDLONG THOMPSON" is such a distinguished way of saying "George Thompson" that it is not to be wondered at that the owner of the name was a literary man. He was, in fact, a fat little poet who posed as "decadent," and his chief worry was that his fresh pink cheeks were hopelessly out of character. But despite his prettiness, he succeeded fairly well in creating the proper illusion. There were, of course, some mishaps; but that was to be expected.

Once, for instance, when he was absent from his haunts, the circle of his friends was informed that he was suffering from indigestion. And what, I ask you, can be more intellectual among illnesses than that? But it was a most pathetic revelation when it was subsequently learned that the "indigestion" had been in reality a ridiculous attack of mumps! Nevertheless, beyond a few such tragic disclosures, the poet found little trouble in building up a reputation for clever eccentricity. After all, anyone can obtain a certain amount of local notoriety by pretending to like scented cigarettes, flowing ties, and absinthe combined with vermouth.

But in hitching his wagon to a star, Ridlong Thompson had made the rather common mistake of not first ascertaining whether the star was in his own universe.

Every year the poet flung a thin, green volume to a world that was too engrossed in its own vulgar pursuits to appreciate the gift. And as he paid for it out of his own pocket, he was not entirely useless to society. For in this manner he was the partial support of a poor but honest printer whose only

fault was that he had the immodesty to call himself a publisher.

Since Pegasus, however, ate up more in the stable than he won in the races, Ridlong found himself forced to look elsewhere for the crass necessities of existence. And as there is only one institution that consents to support futile little pedants who lack the courage to take a hand in the real game of life, he accepted a university instructorship in English. Here perhaps he might well be left to sneer and invent epigrams alone. Unfortunately, it was just at this time in his career that he fell in love.

II

It was rather a disappointment to the handful of esthetic youths who were his only admirers that this thing should happen. If Ridlong were really the great voice they imagined, he ought to be immune from the blunders and emotions of ordinary humans. Tawdry passion they would have winked at, for that might be set down to the old score of "temperament," but commonplace, virtuous love was not to be tolerated. Indeed, from the latter misfortune his followers had always deemed him quite safe, for most women detested him and considered him unworthy of pursuit.

True, he was a pet of women's clubs—ludicrous organizations dedicated to Browning or Shelley and devoted to gossip or dress. But women's clubs, for all their folly, were harmless enough in their way, and there was slight chance that love would surprise him in such environs. Quite naturally, when he did fall, it was for a pretty, healthy girl

whose looks were far more startling than her intelligence.

Lilly Field was most noteworthy in that she was quite true to her name. She toiled not, save at flirtations, and neither did she spin anything with the exception of lies. She was a typical American—a wholesome, sentimental animal with a proper horror of the unconventional. One further fact may be noted here: she had good taste and an eye for effect, and she was very fond of clothes. Possibly that may prove worth bearing in mind.

It was Bob Benton who, before a select group at afternoon tea, first called her attention to the little poet. He had told a story of an amusing eccentricity of Ridlong's rather well, and received as reward a shout of laughter from the devotees gathered about Lilly. In the silence that ensued, he had added, half musingly: "And that's a man who's never been in love, and what's more, I don't believe he ever will be."

The sudden gleam of interest in Lilly's dark eyes was as good as a death warrant to the poet's future peace. "Bring him around, won't you, Bob?" she begged. "I'd love to see him if he's as funny as you say he is."

How Benton persuaded the poet to accompany him that evening is hard to say. One rather suspects that it was flattery that did the trick. At any rate, Bob, esteeming the affair a huge joke, called hardly a week later with the scared Ridlong in tow.

The poet could be diffident and opinionated at the same time, and as Lilly scrutinized him, criticising his ribboned monocle, his ridiculously cut hair, his downy mustache and the weak, petulant little chin, she ran rather swiftly from a feeling of pity to one of disgust. But the sex instinct triumphed, and she made a sudden malicious promise to herself.

An excellent stage manager, with what amounted to an intuition for the effective, she cuddled up before him in an enormous armchair that made her seem fragile by comparison. The man who is vain is safe from no woman who really desires him, for his vanity is a

vulnerable point at which she may fling darts of pretended admiration with striking result. Lilly, in an unconscious fashion, recognized this, and having once classified the poet, her method of attack stood out clearly before her.

"To think that you are really *the* Mr. Thompson!" she cooed at him with counterfeited awe. "Oh, I have wanted to meet you *so* much! A real author!"

Ridlong glowed—outwardly and inwardly. Did she care for books? Did she like poetry? Lilly listened to his flow of pedantic egoism reverentially, and then confessed (somehow making her recital seem pathetic) that her environment had destroyed her opportunities for reading and study—the only things she really cared for in her heart.

"Oh, Mr. Thompson," she said, "you don't know how I have longed to know someone who would—who would understand." Her voice, very low, displayed the least bit of a tremor. She raised her eyes slowly from the floor and looked steadily and gravely into the poor delighted fellow's face. From that moment he was lost. She could have told him that she thought Strindberg was a German general or that Bliss Carman was queen of Roumania and he would have forgiven her with a laugh.

Before he left, he promised to send her a copy of each of his immortal works, specially autographed. Then, escorted by the smiling Benton, the poet walked out of the house in a fervor of nervous excitement such as he had never known before. He was confident that he had made an impression. He had. But it was not precisely the one he imagined. "Of all the silly little fools!" Lilly answered her mother's inquiries when she went upstairs after their departure.

III

RIDLONG was a common visitor after that, and the little man's infatuation was somehow tragic for all that it was ludicrous. One saw him pacing up and down the street outside the Field home, not daring to call for the fourth time in one week, a miserable pest. So, indeed,

Lilly soon found him, and once her triumph was apparent she lost all interest in the man. He was ticketed as merely another fallen male to her credit and shelved away with similar memories.

As a matter of fact, something occurred about this time which came very near causing a final break with him. Upon one dull night when no one else was available, she had consented to use him as an escort to a theater. When the evening was over she promised herself fervently that she would never do so again. She had grown so used to his peculiarities that she did not realize how startling they were to strangers. He had, of course, talked in his thin, effeminate voice at exactly the wrong moment, and everyone had turned and stared at him curiously, noting his foppiness and his painful nervousness. Lilly grew colder after that, and upon one occasion even used one of his autographed sonnets before his very eyes to light the cigarette of a rival.

And then, quite suddenly, the absurd little misfit of a man found himself in unaccountable high favor.

Had he not been so grievously hit, he could have picked the reason at a glimpse. But he was hopelessly blind, and the fact that on certain occasions and in the presence of a certain new admirer she was more than attentive to him, and on other occasions and when alone she was something less than kind, failed to set causes and conclusions traveling in the poet's brain. He was only perplexed. To apply human logic to a goddess would, he doubtless felt, be rather silly. But not being in Ridlong's particular predicament, we imagine that a logical inquiry may perhaps be pertinent, after all. Let us see what such an inquiry discloses.

Not long after the theater episode, Lilly had met the man that all her instincts had commanded her to capture. Rufus Herkert, a big, blond fellow, masculine to the core, and shrewd in a certain business sense, had come out of the West to take his place among the toilers in the big city. Everyone liked him, yet, everyone feared him. You could not deny that he was powerful

any more than you could deny he was magnetic. And Lilly, the smasher of hearts, knew herself conquered at last.

She played every card in her hand, yet saw him still remain in a state of cool admiration. Lilly was not a clever girl, but she had been through too many emotional experiences not to know every trick in the game of seduction. She studied her man and struck upon the correct solution. She knew that here was a male who could not be *coaxed* into infatuation as in the case of Thompson; he must be *bullied* into it. And in this latter method she instinctively realized that the greatest weapon which lay to her hand was indifference. To men of Herkert's pattern only those things which seem unachievable are worthy of achievement.

But if indifference was to be her first move, Lilly reasoned that she must pretend to care for someone else as a symbol that her indifference was personal rather than universal. Whom should she choose? Bob Benton and his sort were out of the question, for they were merely weak imitations of Herkert, and the latter knew his worth too well to be stirred into rivalry with an inferior of his own type. He would either call forth every ounce of his strength or else none of it, and therefore he must be placed in a position where every ounce was needed.

It was then that an idle whim came to Lilly, her forehead knotted with strategy. Inspiration lit up a clear pathway to Ridlong Thompson.

Who, indeed, could better serve her purpose? To be forced to rival a poet was to be forced to rival him in writing tributes in verse and to show an equal ability to create an atmosphere of pseudo-romance—mighty tasks for a practical man! Lilly's mind was made up and the little poet was suddenly overjoyed at her kindness, which, if it appeared only at certain rare intervals, was almost effusive then. But he had no angle of vision, and he remained blind to the real facts of the case.

The scheme worked well in every quarter. Herkert, who honestly liked the girl in a passive way, was startled

into something like jealousy. The almost unbelievable but evidently truthful fact that she cared for the effeminate little esthete angered him into something like an attachment.

Lilly followed up her lead. Whenever Herkert came, the poet, privately called by 'phone, was sure to appear sooner or later and be received in a manner that was embarrassing for another to witness. Ridlong, blushing a bit, would hand her a page or so of laudatory verse, a habit in which she soon had him well trained. She would thank him softly, murmur something about how happy she was to inspire so wonderful a thing as a poet's mind, and turn sweetly to the infuriated Herkert with some such ingenuous remark as: "If ordinary people like ourselves, Mr. Herkert, can't understand, at least we can appreciate, can't we?" Then she would go back to little Ridlong and listen in something like an attitude of reverence to the dreariest of his platitudes. And when Herkert left, he would go off cursing to himself and wondering what she saw in that infernal little ass. The florists, the confectioners and the jewelers were his normal weapons, but this time they seemed to be in vain. He did not realize that he was slowly being goaded into a proposal. And perhaps another week might have encompassed it, had not chance intervened in the shape of disaster.

On a certain Monday, Ridlong failed to put in an appearance. That evening a telegram came to Lilly. She tore it open and read it rapidly through. The poet had suddenly been attacked by appendicitis; he was in such and such a hospital, and was to be operated on in the morning; the case was dangerous; he had told his nurses to let her know the outcome as soon as possible; good-bye and God bless her. That was all.

"Too bad," said Lilly Field when she had finished. Which, when one comes to consider the situation, does not sound exactly like the speech of a woman in love. Ridlong, himself, could not have denied that.

IV

It was Friday before Lilly received word of the poet's condition. When she did, even *she* was startled. A quiet note from one of his nurses informed her that the poet was dying from the shock to his anæmic system. He might live three days; he might live a week; but at any rate no more. At intervals he was conscious, and in one of them he had requested that they send for her. Would she come that afternoon? For the moment, and in the face of that gaunt, hideous thing, death, Lilly forgot her dislike for the little man. A flood of pity swept over her cold nature, and she was even aware of a slight tinge of remorse at the memory of how contemptuously she had used him during the last two months.

That afternoon she went to the hospital.

A pink-faced man in a booth like a ticket-seller's gave her over to an attendant, who led her through a labyrinth of corridors to the poet's ward. His door, when opened, revealed a fat, bald-headed doctor and a nurse consulting in whispers near Ridlong's bed. They cautioned her to be silent and beckoned her in. A little frightened, in spite of her attempt to keep a calm grip on herself, she stepped forward and peered down at the pale face on the pillow. The poet's eyelids quivered; the next moment his dim blue eyes leapt hungrily upon her face. He wet his lips with the tip of his tongue as though to speak, and the nurse turned to Lilly and whispered to her.

"He has something very important to tell you. If he grows worse, please call me immediately." She moved quietly from the room, and the little doctor, with a smile that was meant to be reassuring, followed close behind her.

Lilly pulled up the rubber-tipped chair, and sat down close to the bed. She had the wisdom to keep silent, knowing instinctively how futile words are when one is face to face with the big, bitter things of life.

"Lilly!" The poet's voice came in a dry gasp. His hand slowly crossed

the counterpane and caught her own in a weak clutch. For a moment he was silent, only looking at the white, blank wall in a far-away fashion.

Then he turned his eyes on her once more. "Lilly," he whispered jerkily. "I—love you. Tell me—that you love—me."

It would have taken a crueler girl than Lilly Field to tell the truth then. "Dearest," she said softly, "I have always loved you." And so excellent was her acting that she felt her eyes grow filmy with moisture.

Ridlong's face flared up for a single moment like a torch in the night, and a new strength seemed to flow into his faded voice. "Lilly—dearest—I want you—to do something—for me. I want you—to marry me—before—I die." He swallowed painfully, and with an effort added a single word: "Now!"

For a moment Lilly, thinking him delirious, deliberated whether or not to call the nurse. Then the realization of his sincerity flashed upon her. What would be the gentlest way to refuse him? A wild thought swept into her brain. Need she refuse? Why shouldn't she be a wife for two or three days at the most and after that a romantic widow who had married a dying poet lover? Of Herkert's eluding her she had no fear, for she knew now that the man was practically entrapped. Indeed, she saw herself already forestalling his advances with a wistful melancholy that only aggravated his attachment. And years later what a splendid story it would be to tell her grandchildren! Was there anything really against it? Then suddenly, and for the first time, she saw its impracticability. How could she marry him here, prostrate upon his back? These thoughts flashed through her swift brain before she made answer.

"Dear," she said gently, "I would gladly marry you, but I don't see how I can, when you are unable even to move."

"I've arranged that—already—with the doctor," he answered laboriously. "I only—ask you—to consent. Will you?"

For a moment her mind hung in the

balance, wavering now this way, now that. When she did reach a decision, it was because of an odd triviality. I think I said she was very fond of clothes. To Lilly pondering there, cool, clear-eyed and selfish, came a vision of herself clad in the simple, effective garments of a widow. Black with her coloring was superb, and with just the right touch of pathos added she could not be less than charming. Her mind was made up. She rose, stooped down, and by way of answer touched Ridlong's forehead with her lips. For a moment the cold, crass girl found herself carried away by a flood of emotions; she almost believed at that instant that she really cared for him.

The poet touched a button in the wall; she noted curiously he took care to press it three times. Even before she had ceased pondering upon this rather odd circumstance, she was aware of three figures entering the door—the nurse, the fat doctor and a thin, gaunt man in the stiff, straight collar and black surplice of an Episcopal clergyman.

There followed an interval not at all clear in Lilly's mind. She only recalls that there was a service which was cut as much as was proper, with Ridlong giving his answers weakly, and herself, carried away from all practical considerations by excitement, giving hers with conscious calmness. At the end a ring was produced and a document signed, the doctor and the nurse acting as witnesses.

It was then when it was all over that Ridlong fainted dead away. It was then, too, that Lilly felt the first surging of reaction, and found herself troubled by vague, uneasy premonitions.

V

THERE is very little left to tell. There is, however, one thing which may be worth adding. That is the visit that the bald-headed little doctor paid Lilly the next morning.

He met her with an outstretched hand, eyes twinkling, face a gleam.

"My dear young lady!" he exclaimed

almost breathlessly. "My dear young lady!"

Lilly went white with a sudden suspicion. This seemed an odd way to announce Ridlong's death. And upon what other business could he have come?

"Yes?" she queried faintly.

"Mrs. Thompson, let me congratulate you. You are the greatest doctor of us all. You are love!" He grew flowery.

Her white face dulled into a gray like the color of fine ashes. "I don't understand," she stammered.

"Your husband is going to recover."

She swayed, and would have fallen had he not supported her. Then she fought for control of herself, and asked him quietly to explain.

The sudden happiness of that death-bed marriage, it appeared, had been responsible for the change in his condition. He had gone through a bad night, weathered the storm, and his system showed signs of putting up an astonishing fight for recovery. . . . God was very good. . . . She was a fortunate girl. . . . He babbled on endlessly, fancying, poor man, that his words were helping her to recover from the shock of the unexpected good news. And as she made no comment, and only listened to

him in a sort of bitter silence, no doubt he believes so to this day.

The years have sped by, and Lilly, with her sturdy hatred of a scandal, is still Mrs. Thompson. And indeed, were it not that she persisted in thinking herself miserable, she would perhaps be fairly contented. And no one can hope for more than that.

In Ridlong himself, the years have wrought heavy changes. He is still peevish and petty, always the *little* man. But if his books have not made him famous, they have, at any rate, procured him an important chair in an important university. And it is only in such a narrow world as the scholastic that Ridlong could ever have hoped to shine. He accepts his wife philosophically, even absent-mindedly, and it is well that he does so, for her figure has grown rather dumpy and her face washed out and drab.

But in front of Lilly there is always the thought of how happy she might have been with Herkert — double-chinned, puffy-eyed Herkert who, when he sees her now, wonders whether he wasn't a little mad at the time he first knew her. Of course she wouldn't have been any happier with him than she is with Ridlong. But then she thinks she would—which is rather pathetic.



RONDEÑAS

By Thomas Walsh

I ASKED the marble for a little urn
To hold my tears and say my blessing there;
It seemed as though it answered in return:
"I am unworthy of her breast so fair."

The granite then I asked if it would be
Eternal sentry where she sleeps apart;
There sighed a message from its depths to me:
"Unworthy I to hold so hard a heart."

LETTERS OF MARQUE

By Harry W. Ostrander

JAMES HOAGLAND, the novelist, came East when Billy Allwell was forced into suicide, on the eve of marriage to a charming girl, by the publication in *The Courier* of his letters to Lois Candliss, an unknown woman, whose character was very clearly defined by the nature of Billy's communications to her.

Billy Allwell made no denial to the world at large—nor any excuse. Seeing what appeared to his weak nature the easiest way out, he adopted it. His fiancée sailed for Europe and went into retirement until tongues ceased to whip. With her this story has no concern.

Durgan and Jones, the proprietors of *The Courier*, besides being embarrassed, were sorry—in a business way they were sorry—that they had pressed their game too hard. They had not known that Billy's affairs were in such a bad way. If they had known, they would have waited until after his marriage; then they could have milked him comfortably for years with no danger of his running dry in this deplorable manner. Lois Candliss was sorry, too: a strong woman is prone to like a weak man, even if she unconscionably takes advantage of him; besides, Billy had been the source of a very comfortable income to her before his refusal to increase it had resulted in the publishing of his letters. How comfortable that income had been may be judged from the fact that Billy had left practically nothing.

Billy's was the old case of the dupe and fool—the fool who has been inveigled by an unscrupulous woman into writing compromising letters to her.

He had not tried to palliate his sins to

the world, but, before he stood before the looking glass to watch his own passing—so it was inferred, from the way he had fallen in front of the dresser—and pulled the trigger, he had written and mailed a letter, setting forth the circumstances of his duping and subsequent blackmailing, to the only one he knew would believe him—James Hoagland. And James Hoagland came East.

Of late years, Hoagland had traveled much and far, seeing Billy only at rare intervals, so it was not generally known that they were close friends. He was thus able to prosecute his inquiries without arousing the suspicion of the vampire crew: Durgan and Jones and Lois Candliss.

"How's business, Lois?" Durgan, the fat member of the rascally firm which owned *The Courier*, with difficulty shifted a huge cigar in his mouth—he would not remove it—to permit the utterance through his blubbery lips of even this curt greeting.

"Eloise now, sir, if you please." It is a tribute to the charms of Lois Candliss that she courtesied gracefully in a tight skirt. Despite the popular superstition that adventuresses are tall and of serpentine form, Lois Candliss was short, and, though she was not fat, nor even plump, her soft roundness hardly suggested the willowy curves displayed in trailing gowns by the wicked woman of contemporary melodrama.

"What's that?" Durgan was now punished for his laziness and impoliteness by his cigar dropping from his lips to the floor.

"Behold me, the idealized idol of a poet's dream! 'Lois' is too curt and sharp a name for his sensitive, musical

ear. 'But the soft, drawling melodiousness of "Eloise"'—I am quoting to you from his latest effusion. Don't you wish you could see it?' She waved a paper tantalizingly before him.

"Who is he?" Durgan noticed with dismay that she had stepped on the cigar which he would not have been above picking up after she had gone.

"Mr. James Hoagland, the celebrated author of 'Carlotta's Courtship,' 'The Unpublished Poems of Fuzzy-wuzzy' and other best sellers now in their thousandth editions!"

"I'll be— Now don't you have the— don't you have luck, though!" Durgan concluded admiringly.

"You must wait till I get some better ones than these." She handed him some letters, and then deftly snatched them from his clumsy grasp. "Would you pry into the budding freshness and shyness of first love?" she mocked from the doorway. "By the way, my last name is Allardyce now. Your ugly paper spoiled 'Candliss' for me. I liked that name, too." She pouted prettily and was gone. Durgan kicked the fragments of his mashed cigar under his desk, lighted another and dreamed of a joyous plucking to come.

James Hoagland was undoubtedly an ardent admirer of Eloise Allardyce. The sweet, cloying days of loving and being loved dragged by, and each day added another note to the already large pile of those she had received from him. Sometimes they were tender and manly; sometimes they sparkled and glowed with the peculiar wit and charm which distinguished him as the master writer as well as the lover; sometimes they were full of the suggestive innuendo, delicate hints of alluring naughtiness about their relationship which showed that, even if Lois wished, in spite of her unsavory past and the probability that she would be plucked by her present partners, to enter into the Eden of marriage with him, James Hoagland had no such idea. They were all the better for her purposes, however. Coming every day, his letters formed an unbroken chain which connected and knit each to the preceding one. They were true love

letters: nothing extraneous, no taint of material affairs or commonplace news was allowed in them. Such was their detachment from the world that Lois often felt, on reading them, that they were alien to her, addressed to some other woman, so far were they above the pettiness of her own sordid life.

Notwithstanding the lofty plane on which he held himself with her, James Hoagland seemed to have no difficulty in combining his love with his business affairs. His manservant noted as a curious fact that among the letters given to him to mail were a great many addressed to a governmental department at Washington.

"He won't come through." With this utterance in the everyday vernacular, Lois announced her presence one morning in the private office of Durgan and Jones.

"He won't?" incredulously echoed and questioned the two partners.

"Believe me, I've had a time of it!" She sank limply into a chair. "He called me every polite scoundrelly name he could lay his tongue to and dared me to tell him what I could do if he wouldn't give me the money. And I did."

"He refused?" Wonder and disbelief were still in Durgan's voice. He could not comprehend that Hoagland could be such a fool.

"Yes, he did, you poll parrots!" Lois cried exasperated. "And now what are we going to do?"

"If we can't make money any other way, we can always get out an extra edition of *The Courier*." Durgan fumbled over the pile of Hoagland's love letters. There was more money and less danger in keeping silence.

"There'll be a nice little libel suit, but I think these will see us through." Jones sorted a pile for himself.

"Plenty of material here," he commented. "I rather hate to publish this stuff since—since Billy Allwell." He was sorry as soon as he had spoken. For one embarrassed moment all three were silent.

"Should think Hoagland would have remembered that," finally grunted Durgan.

"He wasn't here then." Lois was glad to say something. Billy did not rest easy on her memory.

"Well, these will put the fear of the Lord and *The Courier* into the hearts of some others we know, anyhow." Jones looked at them significantly, and, picking up the jumble of letters, took them downstairs.

The newsboys shouted long and loud that night. James Hoagland found himself suddenly unpopular.

For a week *The Courier* blatantly cried its news, but the other papers said little about it. Hoagland started a prosecution for criminal libel and a suit for damages against *The Courier*.

Durgan and Jones received their summons in the suit for damages with great calm. Still calmly, they secured bail for themselves after they had been arrested on warrants charging criminal libel. They were somewhat puzzled that Hoagland should sue and prosecute them. He must be crazy, they reasoned, not to understand that they had the goods on him. They became uneasy when they were served with yet another summons.

"I thought he had already brought every kind of action he could against us," Durgan grumbled.

"Suit for violation of copyright!" Jones cried out in amazement. He and Durgan puzzled through the legal phraseology.

"He had those letters copyrighted! Durgan, I'm beginning to think we are stung." He heard the newsboys crying in the streets. "The other papers have it already," he continued. He sent a copy boy out for a *Journal*.

"Hoagland Turns Tables on Libelous *Courier*," ran the headlines. The paper went on to tell how Hoagland had thoughtfully provided witnesses when Lois Candliss had tried to get money from him for the letters; how she had already been arrested and had confessed implicating the proprietors of *The Courier* in this and other blackmailing conspiracies. It also stated that each letter to Eloise had been copyrighted as soon as written, and that all of them would appear in book form before the term set for the trial of the blackmailing proprietors of *The Courier*. The title of the book would be "The Love Letters of Fuzzywuzzy." Fuzzywuzzy was a character already known to Mr. Hoagland's readers in "The Unpublished Poems of Fuzzywuzzy." While it was understood that the love letters were slightly risqué, they were yet written in Mr. Hoagland's inimitable style and would undoubtedly command a host of readers.

"We are going to be the laughing stock of the country," said Jones angrily.

"Worse than that," said Durgan. "We are going to jail."



AH, THESE LADIES!

By George B. Morewood

THE militant is a revolting female.

The flirt is not a very engaging character.

The mother-in-law is only relatively objectionable.

The divorcee is an abandoned woman.

Woman in general is "the last word."

AN OLD MAID

By Louis Untermeyer

DAY after day she knits and sews,
Waiting for nothing—yet she waits;
Hemmed in by silence, pansy rows,
A set of Lytton, five old plates.
There is a bird that seldom sings,
Four *genre* pictures on the wall—
Day after day she sees these things,
And that is all.

Great joys or sorrows never came
To set her placid soul astir;
Youth's glowing torch, Love's leaping flame
Were never even lit for her.
The harsh years only made her wear
Misfortune like a frail perfume—
It hung behind her on the stair
And filled the room.

Tending her lilac grief with tears,
Her soul grew prim and destitute;
An empty guestroom, locked for years,
Musty with dreams and orris root. . . .
The strengthening cares, the kindling strife
Of living never swept her high—
For even in the midst of life,
Life passed her by.



BAKER—How is indigestion contracted?
PHILOLOGIST—Some people refer to it as gout.



EVE would never have become entangled with the serpent if she had had
another woman to gossip with.



POSSESSION is nine points of the law—self-possession ten!

DONOGHU'S HOUR

By Donn Byrne

“YOU will take fifty of your Senegalese. You will take a machine gun. You will be out of the camp in ten minutes.”

“Yes, sir.”

“You know the oasis at Bir Nara? Yes? You will be there at daybreak.”

“Yes, sir.”

“You will hoist the colors at the line due south if you are there first. If a British detachment is there before you, you will take the position and then hoist the colors.”

“Yes, sir.”

“You will then hold the position until the battalion arrives. You will do everything possible to get there first. If you are there first no hostilities will occur. You understand what to do if you arrive second. That's all, I think. Good luck! Good-bye! And, oh, Captain Donoghue!”

“Yes, Colonel.”

“Report by runner, will you?”

“All right, sir.”

The old colonel was always brusque when anything untoward happened. He usually carried the suavity of his days in the Ecole St. Cyr on all occasions, exactly as he never changed the cut of his Napoleon. Donoghue knew that to get to the questioned frontier before the advance guard of the British column, his Senegalese would have to march quick time nearly all the thirty miles. They had already done eighteen that day.

The Senegalese were already being lined up by the young Dahomey sergeant; the machine gun men were raising the tripods. Their long, vicious Lebel rifles were shouldered. Swarthy Kabyles and Berbers of the Turco com-

panies raised their hook noses and spat at the negroes in disgust. A group of Foreign Legion men grumbled at ceding the advance guard to the Senegalese.

The battalion raised a cheer as the quarter-company started off. The Legion men gave a delighted shout of “*Ce bon Irlandais!*” The officers whispered “Remember Fashoda” as Donoghue swung past. He nodded.

Then they stepped out into the desert. The men were all delighted—Donoghue could see that. They had had no real fighting for years, beyond an occasional punitive expedition against remote Kabyle tribes, or hunting down slaves along the frontier of the Belgian Congo. They were off to fight organized troops, as the Zouaves went to the Crimea. The little corporal who was carrying the colors in their oilskin case forgot discipline for a moment and grinned delightedly at the captain. The young Dahomey sergeant had thrown back his shoulders until his blue Zouave jacket was near to bursting. He whistled “The Marseillaise” viciously between his clenched teeth.

Donoghue knew every man of his troop. His sergeant he had captured from an Arab slave trader when he was a *sous-lieutenant* of Spahis. He had trained him until he was the best sergeant of the native regiments. His little corporal he had saved from the stakes at the hands of Ugandese raiders. Nearly every one of the men had come into the fortress a naked savage and been transformed under his eye into an efficient infantryman in baggy blue pants and red cummerbund and *chèche*. And they looked on the tall, hawk-nosed, grizzled Irish officer as nothing short of a deity.

The column had moved on from Abecher on instructions from the Quai d'Orsay. One of the periodical frontier problems of the hinterland of the Sahara had arisen, and a battalion had been despatched to hold the line. Hostilities would precipitate an international conflict that might develop into a Continental shambles. If Donoghue won his race against the advance guard of the English force that had left Khartum on the same errand, he would obviate most of the difficulties. Smooth-shaven, shifty men would parley in the chancelleries of Europe and settle the question according to the dictates of diplomacy. If he arrived too late, his orders were explicit: he was to attack. Messages would rip and crackle along thousands of miles of telegraph wire, and within a day troops would be mobilizing along the Breton dunes and squat gray cruisers would hurry from the slips of Portsmouth.

The camp was lost behind the waves of white sand. The troop tramped forward with the rapid, nervous step of the African of the desert. The long midday rest had refreshed the men, and they were as strong as though they had just left their barracks. Donoghue could see that they wanted fight. They would strain every nerve to win, but they hoped to arrive too late. Their footfalls sounded in unison, with the dull thud of a mallet beating clothes.

"Attention. Rout step."

They could get along faster now. Their captain would utilize their native instinct of hunting. That would help in reaching the oasis first. The men broke the formation with a shuffling sound as of dancers on a sanded floor. They spread out like a pack of hunting wolves.

They were barely twenty minutes out of camp but they had gone nearly two miles. The sun would go down in another forty minutes. It hung in a vague scarlet blotch behind them, and colored the white sand yellow before them. It was as though they were dashing through a limitless field of ripening wheat. The desert rose in waves as far as they could see, and in little hills and in gullies and chasms. There was a long clear rift

where a sandstorm had passed. Heat struck upward.

At sundown the men would stop for evening prayer and for their quarter-hour rest after the hour's march. Then Donoghue planned another hour's burst before nightfall.

"Attention. Quick time."

The shuffle grew faster. They bent forward like hounds straining at a leash. They closed up into a blur of blue. In the middle of the troop the black cover of the standard rose like the mast of a ship. There was no hard breathing. There was no sound at all beyond the soft crumbling pad of the hundred white-clad feet and the flap of the bayonets against the men's thighs.

The young sergeant was several yards in advance of the troop. Occasionally he would break into a lope and gain on the men, and then slow up until they were just behind him. Then he would lean forward and begin his lope again. He had taken his rifle from his shoulder and was carrying it in his hand.

Donoghue looked back at the sun. Only half of it was above the violet horizon line. The yellow was changing to pink along the sand hills. Muezzins would now be chanting from the minarets of Algiers. It was time for prayer.

"Halt. Fall out."

The line broke its step, wavered and stopped. The Senegalese split up into groups and knelt with their faces eastward. A tall private chanted the verses.

Donoghue turned and looked back at the sun. He always felt an intruder at the prayers of the troops, though they never seemed to feel it. He had become so much a part and parcel of his company and they of him that it seemed as if he should join in. He took off his *kepi*.

Tonight they were reciting the verses on battle. It struck him for a moment that, in spite of every effort they would make, they knew they were going to fight in the morning. The prayer rose in a sonorous, triumphant murmur. He wondered what really would happen.

They had broken up now, and were sitting cross-legged talking in subdued murmurs. They were debating the prospects of meeting the British. He saw

the tall private who had acted as muezzin inflaming their Mohammedanism.

God, if those Senegalese were unloosed against an enemy, they would tear them limb from limb! He had seen twenty-five of them once attack two hundred armed Kabyles, and remembered how no Kabyle captives were taken and no Kabyle combatants escaped. What chance would the debilitated British have against troops of whom even the Foreign Legion was envious? What chance would an English detachment have against those savages with the promise of the Prophet rising like a flame within them?

Darkness was creeping up now. He would make another dash before night broke, and then rest until moonrise. He gave the order to fall in. The sergeant repeated it with a snap like a snarl.

Shadows were closing around. The men moved as in a huge spot of light that would contract little by little. Darkness crept on like a cloak of soft black velvet. Donoghue could merely feel it fall about them. The men moved onward in a blot of dark color. They changed rifles from one hand to the other with a soft click as barrel struck against palm. They resembled a huge insect crawling forward. The Dahomey sergeant was still in advance. The staff of the standard towered up from the mass like some grotesque weapon. There was the soft glug of water in canteens.

The prospect of action in the morning affected Donoghue with a wild feeling of elation. Queer spasmodic shivers ran through him. He had a desire to sing. The crumbling sand sprang under his feet like elastic.

His fifteen years in Africa had shown him much fighting: sharp night attacks against Moorish tribes, stealthy jungle stalking for raiders and occasional campaigns into the desert; but, like his men, he had had no hostile contact with foreign troops.

Fifteen years before he had arrived at the headquarters of the Foreign Legion in Algiers, had been cursorily examined and thrown a uniform. To the glowering old sergeant who received him, he was just more meat for the Moors, like

any pickpocket from Whitechapel or remittance man from Europe. For his five years of service his daily five-centimes pay went for pipe clay. He got his promotion to non-commission rank in his first enlistment. In his second term he got his sub-lieutenancy of Turcos, and later his lieutenancy and transfer with the grade of captain to the native regiment—all, as the regulation for foreigners demands, *pour faits de guerre*.

The fifteen years had changed him. When he came to Algiers he was a chubby youngster of twenty-three, ruddy in the face, with a small mustache. Now he was as lean and bronzed and lithe as an Arab cavalryman. The hair was gray about the temples and beginning to thin. He had a ready smile but seldom spoke.

They liked him in the African service. His commission as *chef de bataillon* was in a pigeonhole of the governor general's desk. He might reasonably expect his colonelcy within ten years. In the old days of McMahon, *roi d'Irlande*, he would have gone to Paris later, and might even eventually have fingered a marshal's baton.

He was satisfied, though. They knew that his enlistment in the Legion was not due to any offense or shady affair at home. What gave him more satisfaction was that his record was in the British war office as one of the most dangerous men in the African service.

He was known in Trinity, Dublin, as Patrick Sarsfield O'Connell Donoghue—Donoghue without an "e." His father had held a majority in the Enniskilling Dragoons, and he was intended for an infantry or artillery regiment. He failed in every examination in every subject but mathematics, and left for Aldershot without a degree.

But he left for Aldershot with the good will and good wishes of every man, professor and scout in the university. Even the worm-eaten old lecturer in Greek history left his rooms to give Donoghue a moldy monograph on the campaigns of Alexander on the day of his departure.

His father was retired then, and had a little country place near Sligo. He

used to play golf with the then attorney general, whom he would beat regularly. He rode to hounds with a member of the Cabinet, who used to visit the town. Between the golfing and the fox hunting and the old man's faith in his son, Donoghue was one day apprised that a commission was open for him in a guard regiment.

At the most he had hoped for the Connaught Rangers or the garrison artillery. To belong to one of those magnificent regiments whose officers wear bearskin busbies and scarlet and gold sashes seemed a wild dream. It was some time before it assumed the proportions of a reality.

In Ireland they were overjoyed. They never doubted for an instant that his career was made. They expected him to follow in the path of Wellington, Roberts and Kitchener, and Dillon who led the Irish Brigade in France, and O'Higgins, captain-general of Chile.

And against the purple sand dunes of the Sahara he saw the little gray rambling house that had been battered by the Atlantic storms for three hundred years. He saw himself, striding out to show his brave guards' uniform to the fox-hunting parson at the end of the village. And he could hear the cackle of the old housekeeper:

"A great pity it is, him to be going with the bloody English when he should be drillin' by the riverside in the moonlight, with his pike in his hand and in his jacket green."

His friends somehow gave him the same impression. While it seemed all right to go into an Irish regiment, it struck him as something like arrant treachery to be in one that was entirely English. Even the major of the Enniskillings felt that.

But all qualms vanished under the glamor of the sash and busby. The boys in Dublin examined him as if he were a prehistoric exhibit. They appeared surprised that he could move and walk and even speak in his new finery.

His feelings were of complete elation. He noticed how the passengers on the mail boat had gazed at him in awed admiration on his way back to London.

One man seemed surprised at his own temerity in asking for a match.

He was rather taken aback at his reception at barracks. There didn't seem to be any hearty welcome for him. The old colonel had a look of icy coldness that surprised him. But he thought this must be the reception of every subaltern.

The frigidity continued through mess that night and in the morning when his captain brought him the rounds of the company. It continued for several days. He tried to engage his brother officers in conversation, but they were coldly and peremptorily polite.

It was only after a couple of weeks that he got his inkling of how matters stood. The company was falling out. He said something to the first lieutenant. He received a scant answer.

"Oh, by the way, Mr. Donoghue"—that "Mr." was like gall—"haven't you got some Irish regiments over there, militia and yeomanry and things like that?"

"Oh, yes, a lot," he answered. "Why do you ask?"

"Oh, merely curious," the second lieutenant replied, "merely curious."

He didn't understand him for a minute. Then it broke in on him. The busby felt like a ton of iron on his head. The red tunic swelled under his chest. His cheeks flamed like fire. The lieutenant was walking off. He felt he wanted to run after him and plunge his saber into his neck. A corporal standing near laughed. He turned around suddenly and the laugh broke off.

Whenever he thought of the incident he grew as red as he was that day on the drill ground. His long discipline in the desert could not master that. He would stop in the middle of his stride and grasp his saber. His eyebrows would contract. He would curse long and viciously under his breath.

He was thinking of it now as he strode along by the troop. His chin had fallen on his breast. He marched mechanically. The moon had risen and he was making out the course by compass.

The troop was swinging forward in step. The moonlight gave the dunes a

white, leprous look. The men had the appearance of giants in the Thousand and One Nights. They threw gigantic shadows behind them. The standard pole cast a long black line that ended in a faint thread fifty feet behind. The moonbeams drew little glints of silver from the barrels of the rifles. They struck flashes from the Maxim that was being carried on its tripod in the rear, like some horrible squat serpent borne by priests in a barbaric procession.

A faint breeze had risen and was stirring the fine sand with a noise like the rustle of dry leaves. A little sand owl hooted derisively in the distance. Now and again the machine gun carriers gave grunts of effort.

From a clump of palm trees in front a marabout bird that had strayed far inland from the marshes rose with a raucous caw. They could see its long bill in the moonlight. It threw back its legs and flapped off eastward. It seemed to be flying straight into the white disk of the moon.

Donoghu's *kepi* was pulled forward. He was holding his saber by the middle. He was going over every little detail of his life in the guards.

He had endeavored to conquer the antipathy toward him by dint of work. Beyond the necessary presences at drill and mess he meddled no longer in the regiment's affairs. He was slowly and surely being pushed to the wall.

He brought the colonel what he thought was a perfectly new idea for a company advance under fire. The colonel heard him to the end.

"As tactics," he had said—"as tactics, Mr. Donoghu, your proposal might be looked on with favor by a horde of Fenians with bludgeons, or by the irregulars of His Majesty of Abyssinia. Why not forward it to the headquarters of either?"

That ended that course of action.

If it had not been for his father, who was telling everyone who would listen to him of the magnificent career his son was making for himself, and for the boys, to whom he had given photographs of himself in full dress uniform,

he would have asked for a transfer to another regiment. But there had been too many dreams woven about him.

The atmosphere of it all stifled him. The salutes of the lumbering Cornwall men and the cockney prize fighters seemed to veil jeering insolence. The men had noticed their officers' attitude and were coming as close to actual insult as they dared.

Even in spite of all, he would have struck out and tried to conquer. But there was the episode of Edith Grierson. That was the part of it that made Donoghu spit gall.

It was asinine, purely asinine. But Donoghu was twenty-three. He met her at a couple of dances. She was fair and tall and caustic.

Donoghu was in need of sympathy. He didn't tell her his troubles. He would tell her afterward. The more difficult his position became, the more serious grew his attachment. Normally it would have been a passing psychological phase. In Ireland the mess would have discovered it and bantered him good-naturedly until the affair had passed over.

They met again at a dance. They danced. They went out to the conservatory. They talked for a few minutes. There was a flutter at his throat. He attempted to take her hand.

She drew back and eyed him. There was a mean, hard laugh in her eyes.

"How you Irish do love to flirt!" she said and moved off.

He got hot and red, and then very cold. He went out into the garden and cursed her and himself and the regiment and the day he entered it.

Within a day his resignation was in. Within a week it was accepted. No one said good-bye to him. He felt that they all knew about the Miss Grierson incident and would laugh over it that night at mess.

Next day he was in Havre. Two days later he was in Marseilles under the care of a corpulent sergeant of Zouaves. Five days later he was in the quarters of the Foreign Legion at Tournay, being licked into shape by a cadav-

erous corporal with a voice like sulphuric acid.

The only regret he ever had was for his father, to whom he had never written and from whom he had never received a line. The old soldier's heart, he knew, must have been broken. He wondered how he played golf and went fox hunting after.

Over in Algiers they liked him from the day of his arrival. The cadaverous corporal, who had threatened to boot him at his first drill, nursed him for days when he was down with sunstroke. The Spahis and Zouaves had always a chair for him at their tables in the cafés. Even the saturnine Kabyles met him with a grunt of welcome when he strolled through their tents.

He liked the life there: the color and glamor in the barracks and the fierce, reckless spirit of the men. He enjoyed himself, except when he went out into the sand dunes and thought of the four months he was in his guard regiment and wore his busby and his sash of scarlet and gold.

It was midnight now. The men had come fifteen miles. That made thirty-three that day. They were shuffling on in a rapid trot. The Dahomey sergeant still kept ahead of the troop like the bellwether of a herd of sheep. Only the frequent shifts at the machine gun and the standard showed that the troop was tired. They were near a group of stunted palm trees and a little spring.

Donoghue gave the order to fall out and bivouac. They were due two hours' sleep now. Then they would have to be up and on the march if they were to keep in the race.

Arms were stacked with a clashing rattle. The troop sat down and munched the rations from their haversacks. The six sentries took up their posts. The sergeant made his rounds. Somewhere a pair of jackals howled.

The moon was high now. Against the black of the sky stars stood out like patches of white fire. Faint silver twinklings came from the dusty leaves of the palm trees. Water rose from the spring in a soft bubble. It flowed out in a little silver river that grew fainter

and fainter and finally disappeared in the sand.

Donoghue wondered how the English detachment was getting along. He knew now how a cat felt while it waited for a mouse.

The men had unrolled their blankets and lain down on their faces. In their center were the machine gun and the stack of rifles. At intervals the sentries stood bolt upright with their fingers on their triggers.

Donoghue hollowed himself a place in the sand and settled himself in it. He could not sleep. He felt that the next day was too big. He remembered he felt like that going over on the mail boat to the guards' barracks. He wanted to save himself as much as he could. He crushed his *kepi* down over his eyes and lay still.

And then forms and faces rose before him. There was the old colonel of guards sitting stiffly before his desk, and a first lieutenant of guards, and there was Edith Grierson. And there was an old fox-hunting major of Enniskilling Dragoons, and a group of Trinity students, and an old lecturer in Greek with a stained monograph in his hand.

And there was a thin line of khaki troopers centered about a marabout's tomb with a few stunted date palms and a brackish stream.

Occasionally he heard a soft thud as the sentries grounded arms against the sand, and a few stifled yawns and a shuffle as the guard changed.

The moon had passed well overhead now. The men had had their two hours' sleep, but Donoghue gave no order.

He felt the young Dahomey sergeant pat him on the shoulder.

"Are you asleep, Captain?" he asked.

"No, I'm not."

"Shall the men fall in?"

"Go back and lie down," Donoghue directed.

Another hour passed. Donoghue looked around. Most of the men were awake. They lay around, squatting on their haunches and lying on their elbows, and waited.

Donoghue still gave no order.

Four hours had passed before they

were under way again. The air was raw. The horizon was touched with faint splotches of gray.

The troop moved forward rhythmically in step. The sergeant paced alongside with quick, nervous strides. Donoghu noticed that his bayonet was fixed. A sharp breeze moved westward. From behind a clump of scrub there came the twitter of a sand partridge.

Donoghu felt calm now. It was as if, after countless ages, a scale that had been jolted had come to perfect balance. He threw his shoulders back and looked straight forward. About his troops was the dignity of men going into battle.

Tints of rose and gray and emerald were filling the sky. A flock of starlings passed high over their heads. They could hear the rapid pitapat of wings. In the east the sun rose in a crimson blotch. Clouds took the shape of heavy artillery and of massed regiments. They hovered to and fro like smoke from heavy ordnance. Then they suddenly parted and the sun flashed out like a huge crimson balloon.

They lost sense of time and space. Distance became so many steps to be taken until they met a thin khaki line.

The troop routed step and scattered. The sergeant ran forward with nervous steps and whined like a bloodhound. The machine gun was dropped every quarter of an hour by its bearers, and others rushed to it and carried it forward. Every quarter of an hour the pole would be wrenched from the hands of the standard bearer.

Donoghu glanced at his troop from time to time. Their faces were set and rigid. Teeth were clenched. Furrows ran down glistening black jaws. Huge white eyeballs rolled.

He himself felt as if his fists grasped thunderbolts. He was an irresistible power hastening down the alleyways of the world to avenge woeful centuries.

The corporal at his left was gibbering in Arabic. He was reciting verses from the Koran that told of the conquest of the Feringhee and of the victory of Islam.

Occasionally they rested mechanic-

ally. Then they stood rigid and looked eastward. No one spoke.

Hammers seemed to clank in Donoghu's brain. There was a singing in his ears. Above all he could distinguish a well modulated voice drawing: "How you Irish do love to flirt!"

Then they saw the khaki line.

The black sergeant raised his voice and howled like a wolf.

The troop was running now. Three more helped to rush the gun. They took the standard on their shoulders.

Donoghu halted them and drove them into rank. He knew they needed a rest. They stood tense and quivering, with teeth bared.

He was near enough now to distinguish the British advance guard. They had scattered out over two hundred yards. A trim, slight officer was walking up and down. He could see that it was an English, not a native, detachment. He wondered how they would face these black fighters, whose bulk and uniform made them look like old-time *djinn*.

He marched them forward in quick time. The line grew more distinct. He could see the khaki caps. They were the type whose salute had seemed insults. He had no redress then. He was going to have it now.

The khaki line had dropped on their stomachs and were fingering their Lee-Enfields. They were taking no chances.

If Donoghu did not attack, he could imagine his reception. The young officer would come forward with a smile. "Sorry, old man. Here first, you see. Fortune of war!" The khaki troops would examine his Senegalese curiously and then draw aside with a snicker.

The line was lost to view behind a sand ridge. In a minute they would top it. The defense would not be more than one hundred and fifty yards away.

The Senegalese were drawn up in a quivering line. The teeth of the little corporal were chattering in frenzy. One or two of the men were frothing at the lips. They fixed their *chéchias* and tightened cummerbunds.

Beyond the ridge they could hear the

young officer and his sergeant deliver quick orders. Donoghue wasn't listening to them. He was listening to the voice of a young woman in a conservatory at a ball fifteen years ago.

The Senegalese were waiting impatiently, their eyes focused upon him.

"Fix bayonets," he rasped. His throat seemed to have gone dry.

There was a swish as the blades left

the scabbards and a succession of sharp clicks as they were locked on the rifle barrels.

The young Dahomey sergeant was poised on the balls of his feet. His bayonet was at the charge. He swayed backward and forward. He looked at Donoghue. Donoghue nodded.

They topped the ridge and raced downward.



PANAMANIAN NIGHTS

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

(RAINY SEASON)

THE Recording Angel of Hours
Has spilled his ink on the sky,
And how can he write
In his Book tonight?
O Night, with the winds that die,
O Night, with the drooping flowers
And palms too tired to sigh!

The Recording Angel of Hours
Will open the gates of rain,
And wash the sky
Till Night goes by,
And the quick dawn comes again—
A dawn with the breath of flowers
From out a dream's domain.

(DRY SEASON)

Crowded stars and wide-eyed moon
O'er the hills of Panama!
Night of Love, go not too soon
From the dreaming eyes that saw
How you came with winds and stars.
Now you wake the soft guitars
Somewhere down the lazy street.
Let the light and laughter be,
While the little lilting feet
Dance a pagan melody
That is wild and sweet.

SOME MISCHIEF STILL

By Joyce Kilmer

CHARACTERS

MAXWELL JOHNSON

MRS. MAXWELL JOHNSON (*née* HELEN WHITE)

LIONEL MORRIS

JOHN RYAN

A POLICEMAN

PLACE: *New York; the upper West Side.*

TIME: *The present.*

SCENE—*The living room of a six-room apartment. On one side is a mahogany pianola; at the back is a doorway with a heavy portière, drawn aside to show a portion of the hall with a wall telephone. At the right of the doorway is a life size statue of a nude woman, the distance from her feet to her waist being four times that from her waist to her head, which is very small and has no features except a prominent nose. Her arms are stretched out at right angles to her body, and she has been painted a vivid purple.*

It is evening; the electric lamp is lit and there is a faint light in the hall.

MAXWELL JOHNSON, a man of about thirty, is lying in slippered ease on a chaise-longue, smoking a cigar. MRS. JOHNSON is seated facing him on the bench by the pianola. She is a very pretty young woman, rather too highly colored, wearing an extremely décolleté gown of pale green charmeuse, a long string of large jade beads and a broad silver bracelet. She has a profusion of bright yellow hair. One knee is crossed over the other, revealing green silk stockings and silver slippers.

MAXWELL

But Anarchists don't ride in automobiles, do they, Nellie?

HELEN

Max, I do wish you wouldn't tease me about things that are sacred. If you don't want to get an automobile, just say so, but don't try to make fun of things you can't possibly understand!

MAXWELL

But, Nellie—

HELEN

It's hard enough for me to put up with your staying home and lying around and reading the paper while I go out night after night without you, and wear myself out at the Settlement and the Ferrer School and making speeches and addresses and everything in the subway and back in it, and losing all the elation and social consciousness and everything, without having Anarchism and beauty and truth and everything that really means anything to

anybody who tries really to think just made a joke of!

MAXWELL

Good heavens, Nellie, I'm perfectly willing to buy the automobile; and I'm not criticising any of your hobbies! I—

HELEN

Hobbies! Does one wear one's self out for a hobby? Does one die for a hobby? Is the vote a hobby? Is the Woman's Movement a hobby? Is Futurism a hobby? Is the Church of the Social Revolution a hobby? Is preaching the great truths of sex to one's unborn children a hobby? Is—

MAXWELL

All right, all right; let me slip in a word, won't you? I'm not knocking any of your—devotions. I'll get the automobile if you want it. I simply want you to make up your mind whether you want me to get it, or to use the two thousand for a bungalow at Amaranth, or wherever that crazy summer colony is.

HELEN

It would be lovely to have our own place at Amaranth—though I suppose you'd only come out for weekends—you know it's the most wonderful place, with the most wonderful scenery, and only really interesting people are allowed there, poets and sculptors and people who really do things; and there's to be a pageant this summer and Lionel Morris says he wants me to do my barefoot dance; but I do wish we had a car—it would be wonderful just to get into one's own car all the time and go anywhere, and I could take parties of interesting people out on tours to Ellis Island and the Night Court—

MAXWELL

The Night Court! Yes, I think if you run the car you will go on a tour to the Night Court pretty soon, and you'll have a special cop to take care of you, too. But you decide tonight whether you want the car or the bungalow, see? I'm game to spend two thousand dollars on one or the other, but you've got to

decide. (*From the dining room comes the loud clink of the steam radiator.*) There's that radiator again! (*The telephone bell rings.*) And there's the 'phone! (*He goes into the dining room and is heard muttering and pounding at the radiator, which continues to clink.* HELEN goes to the telephone.)

HELEN

Hello! . . . Yes; what is it? . . . Yes, I am Miss White. (*She turns and looks nervously toward the dining room.*) Yes, this is Mrs. Johnson, Sam. It's all right; I know what he wants. Tell Mr. Morris to come right up. (*HELEN and MAXWELL reënter the living room at the same time. The radiator still clinks, but less loudly, with longer intervals of silence.*)

HELEN

Max, Mr. Morris is coming up to take me to the Mortons' studio warming.

MAXWELL

Studio warming, hey? Well, I'm going down to get Ryan to come up and arrange a dining room warming. It's no use telephoning to him; he'll just promise to fix the radiator and then go back to his chair and fall asleep. I'll go down and drag him up by the throat. (*He goes out through the hall door, and is heard to open the outer door and speak to someone.*) How are you, Mr. Morris? Walk right in! The madam's waiting for you.

LIONEL (*off stage*)

Ah, thank you, Mr. Johnson, thank you.

(*Enter LIONEL. He is a handsome, slender young man, very pale, with brown hair brushed straight back.*)

LIONEL (*lifting both of MRS. JOHNSON'S hands to his lips*)

Ah, Miss White! Dear Comrade White!

(*This hand-kissing and dearing business leads the audience to think that MR. LIONEL MORRIS is the villain of the play, a destroyer of homes, a desperate character. As a matter of fact, he is nothing of the sort. He is quite harmless, being a sociable young man of limited education who likes to take part in those radical movements*)

which attract women. He writes obscene poetry and paints pictures and makes sculptures that would be disgusting if they were not so funny. He is a rather interesting hybrid, being part donkey and part tame cat.)

HELEN

Dear Comrade Lionel! See where I put your "Emancipation of Woman."

(She leads him to the purple statue.)

LIONEL

Ah! I never can interest myself in any of my work that is more than a day old. A poem or a picture that I have made bores me when the first flush of creation has passed. I feel toward it as I suppose a father felt toward his children, in those medieval days when one had children. *(He touches the outstretched hand of the statue.)* But dear Comrade White! Why do you make my "Emancipation of Woman" live with a Hiroshige color print? A Toyokune I can endure, but a Hiroshige absolutely spoils the melody of her composition. Better the soft lyrical wall for a background, or perhaps a simple hanging of passionate black satin. Do you mind if I take this abomination down?

HELEN

Surely, surely; you are always so right about everything! Do change anything and everything that will make it more comfortable for your wonderful statue. She has meant so much to me since she came. . . .

LIONEL

I know, dear comrade.

(He has moved the pianola bench to the wall and is standing on it taking down the Japanese print when MAXWELL and JOHN RYAN come in. RYAN is a janitor, and looks like a janitor. He is in his shirt sleeves and wears a battered black derby. He is smoking—no, not a short clay pipe!—a cigarette. He takes off his hat when he sees MRS. JOHNSON, but instantly replaces it.)

MAXWELL *(as he leads RYAN to the dining room)*

Come in here, Ryan. Did you bring your monkey wrench with you?

(RYAN mutters something unintelligible. They go out into the dining room, from which come occasional murmurs of conversation and sounds of hammering.)

LIONEL *(from the pianola bench)*

Do you know, I am not at all glad to see that man.

HELEN

Who? Max?

LIONEL

No, indeed! That dreadful janitor! Do you know, Miss White—that janitor—

HELEN

Don't talk so loud! Max doesn't like me to be called "Miss White." You know he's funny and old-fashioned, and though he's willing for me to be a Feminist and to give money to the cause and everything, it makes him positively rage to hear me called "Miss White." I tell him that a woman doesn't give up her soul and her name and everything like a chattel mortgage just because she's married, but he says that I've got to be called "Mrs. Johnson" because I'm no more Miss White than he is.

LIONEL *(getting down from the bench and putting the color print on the pianola)*

Ah, well, he'll wake up one of these days and learn what Feminism really is. Even the business men must wake up some time. There was a broker that marched beside me in the suffrage parade this year—a broker or a pawnbroker, I never know which is which.

HELEN

But what about Ryan? Why don't you like him?

LIONEL

That janitor! Do you know, he is simply a degenerate!

HELEN

A degenerate? Like Lombroso?

LIONEL

No. Worse than that. He actually has nine children! Last week when I went around with Comrade May Robin-

son Dannenberg and Comrade Rebecca Idleheimer selling "Plain Facts about a Great Evil" and working up enthusiasm for the suffrage rally at the Church of the Social Revolution, I made a special effort to interest the janitors and their wives. We went into every basement from here to 125th Street, and we saw some things that made my heart bleed. And in the basement of this very house I saw this man Ryan rocking a cradle and drinking beer out of a tin pail. His wife was cooking something disgusting on the gas stove and nursing a baby with her left hand. Comrade May Robinson Dannenberg was treated with absolute discourtesy by them; in fact, the woman told her to "go to hell"!

HELEN

But then, those people, you know, they never do anything or read anything or anything. They are just like animals.

LIONEL

Yes, but you and I have got to keep them from being animals! That's what Social Consciousness means. I won't say duty—I hate the word—but it's your right to change the lives of those people and you absolutely must exercise that right, just as you absolutely must vote. There is that woman—a woman, the creature of all our dreaming—(*He points to the statue.*)—who might be out among the fields and the trees and the books and the birds and all the great and beautiful things of life, a sentient, social being; and what is she? What do we find her doing? Having a baby in a coalhole!

HELEN

I see what you mean. That dreadful janitor! I know; I tried to get her to come to my class in the Ferrer School, and she said she had too much work to do.

LIONEL

Exactly! Too much work to do! The thing that has crushed the souls and spirits and hearts of women throughout the generations! But we must stop all this. You must stop it. You must speak to the man—to Ryan—

HELEN

I speak to Ryan? What shall I say to him? He won't come to the Ferrer School.

LIONEL

The Ferrer School must come to him! You must go to him and say: "Ryan, woman is no longer your bond slave! You must have no more babies. You are killing your wife with soul-deadening drudgery. No janitor should have children; no janitor should have a wife. You must put Mrs. Ryan in a model tenement somewhere, and let her lead a normal, intellectual life. Society will care for the children. There are plenty of places where they can go and be studied by scientists and develop, perhaps, into useful members of the community. You will do your work as before, but you must keep Mrs. Ryan away from this drudgery somewhere where she can really live her life." Will you do this?

HELEN

Why, yes, I suppose I ought to . . . (*She picks up her cloak which has been lying on a chair and puts it on, with LIONEL'S assistance.*) It's time we started, isn't it? But wait a minute! Max!

MAXWELL (*coming in from the dining room*)

Going? I hope you have a good time.

HELEN

Yes, we're going, but, Max, I want you to do something for me. You know Ryan better than I do and you can talk to him. Mr. Morris says that he's been abusing his wife, and he thinks we ought to get him to put her into a model tenement where she can develop her soul. He's been overworking her and all that sort of thing, so you talk to him about it, will you? Mr. Morris knows a place where she can go, and we can put the children somewhere, and he can go on with his work, and it will be better for everybody. So you talk to him about it, will you?

MAXWELL

Ryan? Abusing Mrs. Ryan? Good heavens, I had no idea of this. Of course

I'll talk to him about it. I'll put a stop to that, Nellie. Good-bye. Enjoy yourself. And you talk over that plan of ours with Mr. Morris and decide whether you want a bungalow or an automobile.

HELEN and MAXWELL

Good-bye.

(*They go out. RYAN comes in from the dining room.*)

RYAN

I guess that radiator'll be all right now, Mr. Johnson. There was a lot of air in the pipe and the valve was rusted tight, so I had a little trouble loosening it up.

(*He starts out.*)

MAXWELL (*frowning and looking at the floor*)

Wait a minute, Ryan. I want to talk to you about something. (RYAN comes toward him and stands waiting.) Ryan, I hear—don't you think—er—will you have a cigar?

RYAN

Why, yes, thanks.

(MAXWELL goes into the dining room and brings out a humidior. He places it by the lamp on the table and opens it. Both men take cigars and light them.)

MAXWELL

Ryan, what I want to talk to you about is the way in which you—it's about what I hear about the way you—Sit down, sit down!

(*He sits on the chaise-longue and RYAN, looking somewhat puzzled, sits on a chair on the other side of the table.*)

RYAN

What was it you want to see me about, Mr. Johnson? Any complaint?

MAXWELL

Oh, no, not at all! Or, rather, yes, I have a complaint. It's rather a hard thing. I must say I'm surprised to hear about the way you treat your wife.

RYAN (*rising from his chair*)

What are you trying to give me? Your mind—

MAXWELL

Now, that's all right, Ryan; I'm not trying to start anything. I've lived in this apartment for five years and you know me. But they've been telling me that you don't treat your wife right, and I thought I'd tell you about it.

RYAN

Anybody that told you that, Mr. Johnson, is a liar, I don't care if it's man, woman or child.

MAXWELL

Now, Ryan, will you just listen to me for a minute? This thing was sort of put up to me, and I've got to do it. Probably these people are all wrong. Just sit down and talk to me a minute. Have a drink?

RYAN (*sulkily, sitting down again*)

Yes, thanks. (MAXWELL brings in from the dining room a bottle, a siphon and two glasses.) Ain't you got any ice?

MAXWELL

Oh, yes, that's right.

(*He goes into the dining room again and comes back with a plate of cracked ice. Meanwhile RYAN pockets several cigars and pours a generous portion of whiskey into the glasses. MAXWELL sits down again, and as the men talk they drink, refilling their glasses from time to time.*)

RYAN

Now just what did these fresh guys say about me, Mr. Johnson? You know there's such a thing as a libel law in these here United States.

MAXWELL

Well, I'll tell you, Ryan. I don't know whether there's anything in it or not, and these people may have it all wrong, but they said that you were treating Mrs. Ryan very badly.

RYAN

I beat her up, I suppose?

MAXWELL

No, they didn't say anything like that. It's this way, Ryan: These people are

making a sort of special study of people that work hard for a living, and they say—I don't know whether they're right or not—that you're not treating Mrs. Ryan right to make her work so hard and have so many children and all that sort of thing.

RYAN

Mr. Johnson, if any man but you was talking to me like that, I'd knock his block off, the big boob! Why, whose business is it how many children I have? What do they expect she's going to do? Lie on a couch an' have me bring her ice cream all day long? I been married thirteen years next month, an' if anybody wants to know how I treat my wife I refer them to her, I do.

MAXWELL

Well, Ryan, as I said, I'm inclined to think that these people that were talking to me were a bit hasty. But see here; listen to me a minute. These people want to do you a good turn. You'll admit, I suppose, that it isn't the finest life in the world for Mrs. Ryan to be staying down there in the basement all day and all night washing clothes and cooking meals and tending to the children. She's sick every now and then, isn't she?

RYAN

Now and then.

MAXWELL

Well, the idea is this: These people are what they call philanthropists—that is, they're trying to make the world better, to make people happier. Now, they've built a very nice tenement house; it's called a model tenement; it's almost as good an apartment house to live in as this one. What they say is, that you can put Mrs. Ryan there, in a nice suite of rooms, with hot and cold water and a bathroom and electric light and everything for very little money—say five dollars a week. You can come there to sleep nights and you can get your breakfast and supper there with her in what they call the community dining room. You see, they do all the cooking for you and charge you just what the food costs for the meals. Your wife won't have

any more cooking to do, and they'll give you better meals in that dining room than you've ever had before, believe me.

RYAN

I see. What about the washing?

MAXWELL

Well, they have a big laundry in the place and do all your washing for you for about half what a regular laundry would cost you. That sounds like a pretty good thing, doesn't it?

RYAN

A pretty good thing, and I suppose there's nursemaids and governesses for all the children, too, hey?

MAXWELL

Why, as a matter of fact there are—but not exactly in the way you mean. You see, they run a sort of a boarding school, too, the people that run this model tenement do, and they take care of all the children there—keep 'em night and day, feed 'em and dress 'em and teach 'em trades and all that sort of thing. They let them come to see you on Sunday, but you're relieved of all responsibility and your wife of all the trouble.

RYAN

I see. But what's to become of my job when I'm going off to this here model tenement to sleep nights? Don't you know that a janitor has to sleep in the building he's taking care of?

MAXWELL

Well, you're not in love with your job, are you? You'd be willing to do some other work where there was a chance of advancement and better pay, wouldn't you?

RYAN

Sure I would. Where am I going to get it?

MAXWELL

Why, as to that, I guess Mr. Morris or I could get you a job somewhere. You're a big husky fellow and pretty steady, I know. I could get you a job in the shipping department of a factory I am interested in, if you wanted it.

RYAN

What would the hours be?

MAXWELL (*laughing*)

Why, you're going pretty fast, Ryan. I don't know just what the hours would be yet, but I suppose they'd be from half past eight to six or something like that. That's easier than your hours now, isn't it?

RYAN

Much easier. Now, what has all this got to do with my wife having too many children?

MAXWELL

Why, these people think that Mrs. Ryan has had too many children. Some of these people are doctors, and they say it's bad for a woman's health to have so many children.

RYAN

I see. Well, what would you like to have me do about it?

MAXWELL

About the model tenement?

RYAN

No, about my wife having any more children.

MAXWELL

Well, you know—you see I'm not—what they think is— Oh, damn it, I don't know about this part of the thing, Ryan. It's out of my line. I'm not a philanthropist. I'm just talking for these people because they know I know you. About that question you'll have to talk to Mrs. Dannenberg or Mr. Morris.

RYAN

Mr. Morris—he's the little guy that was standing on a chair when I came in tonight, ain't he?

MAXWELL

Yes.

RYAN

Is he a doctor?

MAXWELL

No, I don't think he is.

RYAN

He came into my place the other day selling some sort of a little doctor book.

MAXWELL

I know; he does that because he's a philanthropist.

RYAN

Do people make a living by being philanthropists?

MAXWELL

No—well, as a matter of fact, many people do make a pretty fat living out of it, but Mr. Morris doesn't. He's a sculptor—a man that makes statues, you know.

RYAN

Oh, I know what a sculptor is, all right. What statues did Mr. Morris make?

MAXWELL

Why, he made that statue over in the corner, for one thing.

(*RYAN goes over and examines the purple statue.*)

RYAN

Do you like this statue, Mr. Johnson?

MAXWELL (*laughing*)

I'm not a judge of such things, Ryan. But people who know about art say that it's very good indeed.

RYAN

Is it a good likeness?

MAXWELL

It's not supposed to be a portrait; it's a sort of a fancy statue. It represents the "Emancipation of Woman"—woman freed, you know.

RYAN

Freed from what?

MAXWELL

Why, from overwork, and excessive child-bearing and all that sort of thing, you know.

RYAN

Well, that lady's freed from child-bearing, all right. She's perfectly safe on that score. (*He goes back to his chair and pours out another drink.*) But now let's get back to your friends' proposition. I'm to get a day job and come home nights—is that right?

MAXWELL

That's right.

RYAN

The children are taken off my wife's hands, and she doesn't have to do any more cooking or washing or anything, hey?

MAXWELL

That's it, Ryan.

RYAN

And the place we'd live would be pretty much like this apartment, would it?

MAXWELL

Just as comfortable, at any rate.

RYAN

My wife would have no work to do; I'd work in the daytime and come home nights—there'd be no kids to take care of—it would be pretty much like the life that you and your wife have, wouldn't it, Mr. Johnson?

MAXWELL

Ah—why, yes, Ryan, pretty much the same. What do you think of the proposition?

RYAN

Well, I'll tell you. Of course I wouldn't like to have the children go away—though they are a lot of trouble—but I suppose they'd be better taken care of than we could do, so, if that was all there was to it, I'd say go ahead. And it'd be all right for me, too, if I was a bachelor. But it's on account of my wife that I feel I've got to say, "Excuse me!"

MAXWELL

Why, you don't begrudge your wife a little rest, do you, Ryan?

RYAN

Would I begrudge the old woman a little rest? Yes, by God, I would, if a little rest meant having nothing to do all day except sit around and talk to her friends and run around town. It's just on that account that I say nix to your whole proposition. Now you think I'm a slave driver, I suppose. Well, I ain't, Mr. Johnson, but I've lived with a woman thirteen years, and what I'm

telling you I didn't get out of no books—it's facts!

Listen, Mr. Johnson. What you want us to do is to live just the sort of life that you and your wife live—no children to take care of, no washing nor cooking nor nothing. Well, what I say is, excuse me! That may be all right for you and your wife—she don't need no housework nor children nor nothing to keep her busy. Her time is full of all sorts of useful things—I know that. (MAXWELL *stirs uneasily and looks at the floor.*) But with Annie, my wife, it's a different proposition altogether. She's one of them women—and there's a lot more of them than you think—that can't stand living in a nice regular apartment with nothing to do. I know because we tried it when we was first married. It's like what the old fellow said: "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do"!

MAXWELL

True enough! And—

RYAN

Listen, Mr. Johnson. When we was first married, Annie was one of these here idle hands they tell of. She was an idle hand for three years, and Satan, as the old fellow said, certainly found some mischief for her to do. Not anything real bad—there's no real harm in Annie—but it was mischief all right. For the first three years we was living in a nice apartment in Brooklyn. I wasn't a janitor, then; I was driving a truck. I was out all day and I got home every night at six or seven o'clock. All Annie has to do is to get my breakfast and supper and keep the place clean. Does she do it? Sure she does, for the first four or five weeks! Then she gets to making friends with other women in the building and going out to matinees and vaudeville and all that sort of thing. That's all right—I can afford it—I don't care if she has a good time; but then what does she do? I give her two dollars in the morning to go out and buy a good supper for me when I come home. I come home and she ain't in yet, and the lady in the next flat gives me the groceries that she's sent home. And

what is they? A little chipped beef and a box of Saratoga chips and some baker's bread. About fifty cents' worth. When she gets home I ask her where she's been. Why, Mrs. Eindorfer has took her to a spiritualist meeting, and she's spent the rest of that money to look into a glass ball or have her fortune told or some such foolishness.

Now this goes on for nearly three years. It ain't all spiritualists' meetings; it's all sorts of things. She makes all sorts of friends, women and men, too; I had to beat a couple of 'em up. The flat wasn't kept up; I run into debt; my meals wasn't cooked right or on time, and Annie was half sick all the time just from running around entertaining herself. I ain't blaming her. She wasn't to blame. And what was to blame? The apartment house was to blame. When Peter was born, after we'd been married three years, and I gave up trucking and moved out of that apartment house and got a job as janitor, everything was all right. And everything's been all right ever since.

MAXWELL (*thoughtfully*)

And the apartment house was to blame?

RYAN

Believe me, Mr. Johnson, the only part of an apartment house to live in is the basement, where you can have a regular home. I been a janitor for ten years, and I seen these apartment houses do queer things to families. They don't seem to have no children when they live in apartment houses, that's one thing. And there ain't no coal to bring up and the washing goes out, and there ain't nothing for them to do but just make fools of themselves. And sometimes there's a good many divorces been caused by these here apartment houses. And there'd be a good many more divorces if a lot of husbands knew what went on when they was downtown at business.

Understand me, Mr. Johnson. I don't mean you and your wife at all. You ain't that sort of people, but what I do say is for my wife, and for a lot of women with more education and more

money than she's got, the only sort of life is doing housework and taking care of children all day long. So Annie and me will stay down in the basement, much obliged to you, unless we go out of New York to live in a little house in the country sometime. And Annie'll have just as much work to do there. She's one of them women that wasn't meant to be idle. And now I guess I'll go downstairs.

(*He rises and goes toward the door. MAXWELL sits silent for a moment and then rises a little unsteadily. He holds out his hand to RYAN for a second and then drops it and starts.*)

MAXWELL

Ryan, I—er—why, I guess you're right, after all. I'll tell my friends what you said.

RYAN

All right. No hard feelings, I hope.

MAXWELL

Not at all; that's all right. Good night, Ryan.

RYAN

Good night, Mr. Johnson.
(*He goes out.*)

MAXWELL

There's a man that's master in his own home, at any rate. (*He lights a cigar and walks around the room with his hands in his trousers pockets, coming to a halt in front of the purple statue. He looks at it reflectively.*) Satan finds some mischief still—(*A pause*)—for idle hands to do. For idle hands to do. For idle hands to do. For idle hands—

(*The doorbell is rung violently. MAXWELL starts and runs out into the hall. He returns with HELEN, who is very much out of breath. As she runs into the room the combs drop from her hair, which falls over her face and shoulders. She throws herself on the chaise-longue. MAXWELL sits beside her and tries to push her hair back from her face.*)

MAXWELL

Nellie! What's the matter?
(*HELEN sobs without answering.*)

HELEN

It's those nasty Martins and that nasty policeman and that nasty Lionel Morris.

(*The bell rings again. MAXWELL goes to the door and admits LIONEL.*)

LIONEL

Oh, I'm awfully glad you got back all right, Miss White. I jumped into a taxi as soon as that brute of a policeman came, and then I met all the rest of the crowd at the studio and everybody said, "Where's Miss White?" So I came right up here to find out if you'd got home.

MAXWELL

For God's sake, will somebody tell me what's happened?

LIONEL (*sitting on the pianola bench*)
Why, you see—

HELEN

Be still. You see, Max, we were all at the Mortons' studio, and Adrian Wolfe made a speech about those nasty striking miners in California or wherever it is that everybody is wearing mourning for and parading and all that and this—and Mr. Morris said: "Let's walk up to Union Square and hold an open air meeting to protest." So we went up there and I made a speech and there was a crowd and I saw a policeman there, but I thought it would be all right, and then Mr. Morris made a speech and he said something about trampling on a blood-stained flag, and the policeman told him to stop, and he called the policeman a myrmidon, and some more policemen came and broke up the meeting, and he ran away and wouldn't help me; and I ran down into the subway, and I don't see how he dares show his face in here!

MAXWELL

I'll talk to him presently, but quiet down a little. You'd better go in your room and fix up your hair.

(HELEN rises to go out. *She stops in the doorway and turns to MAXWELL.*)

HELEN

I won't go to that nasty Amaranth this summer, Maxwell.

MAXWELL

No, you won't go to Amaranth.

HELEN

Then will you get an automobile?

MAXWELL

No, I won't get an automobile.

HELEN

Then what—

MAXWELL

I am going to take that two thousand dollars and buy, with the assistance of the building and loan association, a small house in a city called Joplin, in the State of Missouri. It will not be a large house, but I think that you will not find the time hanging heavy on your hands. My brother has a wholesale grocery there, and I dare say he will take me into the business, especially as I have a little money to invest. And I'll come home to luncheon every day. Missouri is a fertile State. My brother has six children.

LIONEL

But, Miss White—Mr. Johnson!
(HELEN goes down the hall to her room.
MAXWELL walks up to LIONEL.)

MAXWELL

My wife's name is not Miss White but Mrs. Johnson—Mrs. Maxwell Johnson, of Joplin, Missouri. Get that? Do you know what keeps me from dropping you down the elevator shaft?

LIONEL

What—what do you mean?

MAXWELL

It's the janitor. Yes, Ryan, the fellow down in the basement with nine children that you and Mrs. What's-her-name wanted to segregate. He told me all about you tonight. You're nothing but a by-product! The apartment house is the real devil in this pretty little play—the apartment house is responsible for Feminism and Socialism and Anarchism and Eugenics and pups like you. You're just a sort of bad substitute for the movies—that's all you are. The apart-

ment house breeds the whole bunch of you—the apartment house and its artificial, lazy, good-for-nothing life.

(LIONEL starts toward the door hurriedly, but stops as if shot when the telephone bell rings close to his ear. He comes back into the room and MAXWELL goes to the telephone.)

MAXWELL

Hello! . . . What's that? . . . Yes, this is Mr. Johnson. . . . No, I don't think so. Hold the wire and I'll see. (With his hand over the transmitter he looks into the room.) Nellie!

HELEN (coming into the living room with her hair in a long braid, wearing a blue tea gown)
Yes, Max?

MAXWELL

What is your name?

HELEN

Why, Helen, of course, stupid.

MAXWELL

Helen what?

HELEN

Helen Johnson.

MAXWELL

Not Miss Helen White?

HELEN

No! No! No!

MAXWELL (smiling)

Well, that's all right, then. There's a cop downstairs with a warrant for the arrest of a Miss Helen White and a Mr. Lionel Morris, charged with making incendiary speeches in Union Square. They think that Morris's taxicab stopped at this building, and the policeman is going through all the apartments. He'll be here in a minute. (In the receiver) All right, Sam, it's all right. Thanks for tipping me off. (MAXWELL reenters the room and sits on the pianola bench. HELEN reclines, with some dignity, on the chaise-longue. LIONEL crouches behind the purple statue.)

MAXWELL (meditatively)

Satan finds some mischief still—

HELEN

What are you saying, Max?

MAXWELL

Oh, I was just thinking of the janitor. I had quite a talk with him after you left.

(The doorbell rings, and MAXWELL admits a large policeman.)

POLICEMAN

Excuse me, sir; it's just a matter of form. I'm looking for a couple of them Anarchist-Suffrage-I. W. W. bugs. It's just a matter of form. The man's name is Lionel Morris and the woman's name is Helen White. Are you Lionel Morris?

MAXWELL

No; my name is Maxwell Johnson. The janitor knows me, and so do a lot of people in the building.

POLICEMAN

Thank you, sir. It's just a matter of form. Now, madam—it's just a matter of form—are you Helen White?

HELEN

No, I am not Helen White. I am Mrs. Maxwell Johnson.

POLICEMAN

Thank you, madam, thank you; it's just a matter of form. You see these parties is incendiaries; they called me a mermaiden. Now, just two more questions—it's just a matter of form: Is Miss Helen White here?

HELEN

No, Helen White is not here.

MAXWELL

And I'm glad she isn't here, officer.

POLICEMAN

You may well be that, sir; you may well be that. Now, is Lionel Morris here?

(There is a pause, during which the purple statue shakes slightly.)

MAXWELL

Well, what do you think about it, Officer? Take a look around the place. Want to look in the dumb waiter or down the kitchen sink?

POLICEMAN

Oh, I know he's not here, Mr. Johnson, and I'm sorry to have troubled you. Much obliged to you. Good night, sir.

MAXWELL

Have a drink before you go?

POLICEMAN

Well, I hadn't ought to but I guess I will, thanks.

(HELEN pours the whiskey and MAXWELL and the policeman lift their glasses.)

POLICEMAN

Well, here's how, sir.

MAXWELL

Here's Joplin!

HELEN

Oh, I'll drink that.
(She takes a sip from MAXWELL's glass.)

POLICEMAN

What's that, something new?

MAXWELL

No, it's old as Adam and Eve.

POLICEMAN

Well, it's a new one on me. Thank you, sir. Good night.

MAXWELL

Good night. (*The policeman goes out. After the door slams shut, LIONEL stands up, but remains behind the purple statue.*) Hadn't you better go to some other apartment house? The cop's gone down the elevator. He'll be gone by the time you get downstairs. (*LIONEL goes out and as he turns he brushes against the purple statue, which topples on its pedestal. He bangs the door shut after him violently, and the statue falls to the floor and breaks into several pieces. MAXWELL and HELEN look at it for a moment and then turn to each other and laugh.*)

HELEN

Oh, look what's happened to the "Emancipation of Woman"!

CURTAIN



MY LADY NICOTINE

By Oden Sheftals

CIGAR	Maiden meditation, fancy free.
Cigar stub	A woman with a past.
Cigarette	Sweet sixteen.
Cigarette stub	Chorus girl.
Corncob pipe	Irish cook.
New French briar	Maiden lady.
Old French briar	A woman talked about.
Calabash	Fair, fat and forty.
New meerschaum	Chemical blonde.
Old meerschaum	One's wife.

LA MADELEINE

Par Florian-Parmentier

LORSQUE Paul Villay se leva, un léger soleil anémié filtrait par l'embrasure de sa fenêtre. Des nuées le voilaient parfois, ce soleil. On eût dit qu'il voulait pleurer, bien que ce fût dimanche.

Paul, un joli garçon de vingt-deux ans, au teint mat, aux yeux profonds comme le rêve, au visage encadré de longs cheveux noirs et d'une barbe adolescente, s'habilla sommairement et vint s'accouder sur l'appui.

Tandis que sur la gouttière quelques moineaux venaient chanter l'ivresse de vivre en joyeux guilleris, le jeune homme, peu à peu songeur, revit les poèmes de son enfance, ses romances d'avenir et il se rappela les angoisses malades, les mélancolies inexplicables, qui parfois lui tenaillaient le cœur. . . . Ah! s'il était prédestiné à l'avortement misérable, après le vertige de pauvres songes stériles? . . . Son âme se déchira à cette pensée.

Mais le sourire du soleil entre deux pluies montant en effluves de la rue, cette joie automnale l'enveloppa. La nature lui apparut simple et caressante. Il se redressa, acheva sa toilette, et sortit. . . .

Dans la campagne, Paul Villay se sentit à l'aise et comme mollement bercé par l'aménité des choses. Puis un regret le prit. Il eut la sensation d'un vide à la place la plus chaude de son être, et comme la révélation que c'était ce vide de son cœur qui jetait souvent le trouble dans sa pensée et dans sa vie.

Il avait eu jadis des débordements d'affection inutile, de ces amitiés d'enfant qui exident impérieusement d'être payées de retour. Toujours déçu, il en était venu à se persuader qu'une âme

généreuse ne peut vivre dans l'étroite et vulgaire société des hommes.

Pourtant, maintenant, il se sentait trop seul, trop emmuré dans sa sécurité égoïste. Le besoin de s'épancher commençait à le tourmenter. Il se fit, tout en rêvant, un fantôme selon son cœur, et il s'y attacha désespérément, d'un imaginaire amour infini.

Oh! une amitié d'épousée digne de lui! une âme douce qui fût vraiment la sœur de la sienne et assez limpide pour refléter son idéal, un cœur qui s'attendrit à l'aveu de ses angoisses, qui se recueillit dans sa tendresse, qui s'exaltât devant la sublimité de ses rêves, une enfant toute simple dont les bras s'enlacceraient autour de son cou et dont les lèvres se poseraient chastement sur son front pensif pour en chasser les ennuis sans raison! . . .

L'après-midi, Paul voulut aller à la fête d'un bourg voisin, pour se distraire, se débarrasser de sa mélancolie, jeter ses rêves au vent folâtre, s'emplir les oreilles du bruit assourdissant des cymbales.

Le soir, quand la maman vint dire qu'il était l'heure du départ, il demanda à les accompagner un peu toutes deux. Elle devança sa mère, pour dire à Paul mille insignifiances, qu'elle allait avoir dix-sept ans, qu'elle s'appelait Virginie. . . . Lui, trouva le nom joli et providentiel, parce que, rapproché du sien, il lui faisait songer au roman de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre.

A dater de ce soir-là, l'on put voir souvent Paul arpenter la petite rue tortueuse et sombre où travaillait Virginie. De temps en temps, il levait les yeux vers une fenêtre derrière laquelle clignotait la lueur pâle d'une lampe.

C'était là, sous l'abat-jour, que marchait l'aiguille alerte de l' Aimée.

Celle-ci sortait enfin. Et tous deux, bras dessus, bras dessous, s'en allaient dans le silence du faubourg voisin, à travers les soirs d'automne mélancoliques. Lui, pieusement, laissait déborder la poésie de son âme juvénile. Elle... lui racontait des histoires d'atelier!...

Un jour, pris d'un immense découragement, il comprit qu'il s'était trompé, que cette petite tête écervelée était incapable de percevoir les vibrations de son âme; et l'amère tristesse des poèmes évanouis le mordit au cœur.

Puis, soudain, il se sentit transporté par une idée surhumaine. Il se promit naïvement de soigner cette faiblesse, d'évoquer de pures, de sublimes pensées sous le front obscur et ignorant de cette fille du peuple, d'appliquer sur son âme l'empreinte d'un sceau divin.

Depuis lors, chaque soir, durant de longues heures, Paul Villay se consacra à cette œuvre folle et sans exemple. Cella dura, dura... jusqu'à ce qu'enfin, ennuyée, un jour, Virginie s'envola.

... Plusieurs années après, dans un quartier écarté de Paris, en l'après-midi finissant d'un jour calme, Paul Villay est accoudé sur sa table de travail. Il semble absorbé par la lecture du dernier livre paru. Il ne s'aperçoit pas que le jour tombe, avec une exquise lassitude.

Enfin, enveloppé par le silence de l'heure, Paul se lève et se met à la fenêtre de son cinquième étage pour rafraîchir son front aux caresses de l'air.

Dans la rue un couple, couple d'amoureux sans doute, s'avance, lentement.

Paul les considère avec intérêt, parce qu'il se souvient, parce que le jeune homme enlace la taille souple de la jeune fille, parce que celle-ci s'abandonne presque sur l'épaule du jeune homme.

Mais, lorsqu'ils passent sous ses fenêtres, une soudaine pâleur s'épand sur ses traits. Une souffrance lui monte à l'âme. Il vient de reconnaître Virginie, et, dans les yeux de celui qui l'accompagne, il a cru voir des lueurs mauvaises. ...

Paul les a suivis la veille. Il sait maintenant. Il arpente une petite rue déserte et sombre, presque pareille à celle d'autrefois. La petite flamme silencieuse d'une lampe veille derrière une fenêtre de deuxième étage.

Tout à coup, une avalanche de voix flûtées dévale sur le trottoir. C'est la sortie attardée d'un petit atelier de couture.

Virginie est là, bien changée. Elle a voyagé et est venue à Paris. Elle est toujours couturière, mais elle ne travaille plus que de temps en temps, lorsqu'il y a de l'ouvrage pressé et qu'elle a besoin d'argent.

Avec mignardise elle offre sa petite main à ses compagnes, qui lui souhaitent bonne chance, avec des simagrées de sirènes. Puis elle se détache du groupe.

Paul Villay s'élance vers elle. "Veuillez venir avec moi, mademoiselle," dit-il simplement, sur un ton demi-chevrotant, demi-impérieux.

Et, l'ayant reconnu, Virginie, suffoquée, le suit, sans savoir pourquoi, irrésistiblement attirée. Ensemble, à travers des rues écartées, ils s'en vont.

Alors, c'est une scène émouvante qui se passe dans le mystère de ce tête-à-tête inattendu. Lui, raconte sa vision de la veille et son déchirement. Il évoque leur idylle d'antan, son amour, à lui, si doux, si naïf, fait de toutes les réserves de sa jeunesse enfermée, son amour tout auréolé de poésie. Et d'une voix tremblante d'émotion il lui rappelle le respect infini qu'il avait d'elle, prêtresse sacrée du temple de son cœur.

Alors, un éclair traverse le cerveau de Virginie. Elle comprend tout à coup la bonté de son pauvre ami, l'héroïsme qu'il eut de vivre près d'elle avec le souci généreux de façonner son âme, son âme qu'elle avait ensuite perdue si étourdiment.

Et, remuée jusqu'au fond d'elle-même, elle se sent mordue par le remords. Un frisson lui court sous la peau, lui secoue les dents, lui serre la gorge. ... Enfin les palpitations de son cœur l'étouffent; elle crie: "Pardon, pardon!" se jette aux pieds de Paul et éclate en sanglots.

THE ONE-ACTERS IN LONDON AND PARIS

By George Jean Nathan

SPEAKING broadly of the current theater, a one-act play may be defined as a play which is only one-third as tiresome as a three-act play. That is, of course, a one-act play not written to serve its purpose as a curtain-raiser in the London theaters. For, as everyone knows, such a one-act play is designed with what would seem to be a deliberate purposefulness to be three times as tiresome as the long play which follows it.* And when I report to you that the new full-length plays in London this season are, with meager momentary exception, quite modernly Gallic in their sleep-breeding lack of genuine value, you may confront yourself with some idea of the quality of the short pieces.

If one enters a London playhouse in time for the curtain-raiser (something that no gentleman does), one is as generally certain to witness a witless, cream-puffing exhibition as one is generally certain, upon picking up an American newspaper, to encounter a piece concerning a romance between two lowly souls which came out of the finding, in the pocket of a suit of overalls, of a random note that had been placed there by the sweatshop girl who had made the garment. Or as one is generally certain, after mentally enveloping a newly met and beautiful morsel with the romantic fumes of a fragrant fancy, with the imaginative perfumes of the kingdom of Micomicon and the dreams of Alnaschar, to hear an abrupt rape of one's reverie in the baggage's inevitable allusion to

her "pet corn." Let us approach, for example, the curtain-raiser called "A DEAR LITTLE WIFE," by Gerald Dunn, one evidently so popular that it has been called on to lift the curtain at more than one theater.

We have here what is known as a "Japanese play." A "Japanese play," in the Anglo-Saxon theater, is any play in which a consideration and study of Japanese customs, morals, attitudes, traditions, character, actions, philosophies and the like are omitted in favor of a backdrop showing "the sacred peak of Fuji hanging above all 'like a snowy ghost in the arch of the infinite day,'" numerous references to cherry blossoms and goldfish, the frequent use of the word "honourable," and two beautiful black and gold screens at the right and left upper entrances. The authentic Japanese nature of the characters in these "Japanese plays" is suggested to the audience via the program, which reassures us that the females are appropriately named Something San and the males Something Jiro or Something Yama, via intermittent passages of dialogue in which the Sans speak affectionately of the moon, and via the practice of the Jiros and Yamas of observing floridly that "The hour of food is at hand; let us go within," in the stead of "Dinner is ready; let's go to it." In brief, one of these so-known "Japanese plays" is any particularly inferior and impossible play whose inferiority and impossible quality it is hoped to conceal through the liberal application of kimonos and the accepted Anglo-Saxon flowery conception of the manner in

* Thus, in comparison, causing the long play to appear somewhat less tedious than it actually is.

which the Japanese speak, a manner which the shrewd and canny Japanese actually affect only when they engage themselves as butlers and valets to susceptible Anglo-Saxons. Thus it has come about that the white theatergoing public's idea of the Japanese is of a race whose lovely daughters are regularly (and with great pathos) seduced and deserted by handsome young American naval lieutenants, whose males run about dressed up like the "Liberty Belles" and whose women in general spend the day long either hopping around fluttering fans held horizontally at their chins or taking flowers from baskets and arranging them in vases, meanwhile (this is an essential element) "singing softly to themselves."

"A DEAR LITTLE WIFE" follows the established ritual as closely as all American military plays follow the especial ritual laid down in their case. (Did you, for instance, ever see one of these military plays in whose second act "the enemy" was not announced 'mid wild alarms to be just on the point of crossing something—bridge, river or what not?) Thus, we have Fuji on the backdrop, a Sugihara San doing the usual arranging thing with the flowers and singing to herself the meantime ("How lovely they are, these flowers," muses the little Sugihara; "how I love them!"), the usual "O Takejiro, be honourably pleased to enter" form of speech, and all the additional usual ingredients of such a usual play. For example, the goldfish business, as follows:

SUGIHARA SAN—There are these flowers to be arranged, and the goldfish are waiting for me to feed them—

TAKEJIRO—Oh, happy goldfish! How I wish I were one of them!

SUGIHARA SAN—No, I do not think you would like it, lying all day in the water underneath the lilies.

TAKEJIRO—Yes, Sugihara San, if I might look at you!

For example, the moon business, as follows:

TAKEJIRO—Oh, Sugihara, you are very cruel. I sing to you "My Lady Moon," and you *are* just like the moon—just as beautiful and radiant, but just as cold and far away.

SUGIHARA SAN—And you, Takejiro, are like the children crying in the night because they cannot call the moon out of the sky to come and play with them! How can the moon, for all she loves them, leave her sky?

For example, the cherry blossom business, with the usual John Luther Long Japanese orchestration, as follows:

TAKEJIRO—I could never be angry with you, Sugihara. I would make your life like the blossoming of the cherry trees for happiness; and we would sit by the sea where the pines sway like girls in the dance, or wander under the high woods and listen to the water leaping down the rocks; and the fireflies would be our lanterns, and the birds our flute players, as they called to one another in the darkness, "Sugihara, O Sugihara San!"

In addition to these many startling novelties, Mr. Dunn has conceived the thrilling dramatic innovation of having one character narrate, in the form of fable, to another and unsuspecting character events that have actually happened. Lest you forget the formula, observe:

"Listen, and hear the story of a clever woman. Oh, yes; she was very clever, much cleverer than Sugihara, and she had a husband—no, not at all like you, Hagi-yama!—who was full of fancies and jealousies and not at all a nice kind of husband, because he suspected that his wife was unfaithful. Et cetera."

But let us not tarry longer in Shaftsbury Avenue with Gerald and his Sugihara. On to the Vaudeville and to "THE REST CURE" of Miss Gertrude Jennings. Gertrude would appear to be a prolific mother in the matter of these curtain-raisers. A round of the London theaters discovers her as a pit-masseuse of alarming fructification. In addition to "THE REST CURE," her "Acid Drops" has teased the asbestos at the Royalty, her "Between the Soup and the Savoury" has been done at the Playhouse and her "Pros and Cons" has similarly been invoked to beguile the Two-and-Sixpences. If these pieces are ever done in America, our critics will say of Gertrude that she "assuredly possesses the knack of the theater." This, alas, is true. Gertrude has evidently been an omnivorous student of "manuals of playmaking," the manual movement being distinctly observable in the bulk of her work. She "builds up laughs," "mixes comedy with

a tear," and so on, with so zealous an obedience to book rules and injunctions that her characters are resolved into the conventional artificial puppets born of such a dramatic education.

I am scarcely one of the profound dolts who loudly debates for "living," "real," "flesh and blood" characters in the drama, being quite aware of the fact that if a playwright has anything genuinely interesting, or even merely diverting, to say, he is at whole liberty to put that something into the mouths of the stock sawdust dolls of the stage, forasmuch as, proportionately few living, real, flesh and blood persons ever having anything worth while to say, it follows that a careless employment of too "real" play characters by the dramatist must succeed in lending to his work a marked air of spuriousness and artificiality. Oscar Wilde realized this yesterday as Molnar, Shaw, *et al.* realize it today. On the other hand, however, when along come playmakers like Gertrude, who have little more in their mouths than a tongue and some teeth and a couple of tonsils, it follows that, having nothing interesting to articulate, they needs must place that lack of something interesting in the mouths of "living" characters, characters taken out of life, if they would have their plays seem not spurious and not artificial, but real. Or at least partly or vaguely suggestive of life.

Given the title "THE REST CURE," apprised that the scene is "a bedroom in a nursing home" and that the piece is a comedy, it should be a matter for your left hand to deduce the weaving materials of the play. Certainly. Man, worn down by overwork, goes to nursing home for quiet and recuperation, and is so disturbed by noises, nurses and nuisances of the establishment that he makes escape back to comparative peace of his home with deep-breathed pleasure. Ward and Vokes *redivivi!* Harken to Gertrude's way of "laughs":

MURIEL—Yes, nurse. (*Going reluctantly to the door*) That there gent in No. 5 hollers at me somethin' awful. He says if I come into the room again he'll wring my neck.

ALICE—I can't help *his* troubles. The grate must be done.

Again:

CLARENCE—My bed squeaks disgracefully. When I didn't jump at the sound of motorbuses, I flinched at the squeaking of the bed.

NURSE—How very strange. Our beds have always been considered quite noiseless.

Laughter is further provoked by Gertrude through the employment of a scuttle of coal which (see bus.) "*Muriel pours on fire with a deafening crash. Clarence gives prolonged scream*"; of a large portmanteau which (see bus.) "*man carries in and throws on floor with a bang*"; and of wild jumpings in and out of bed on the part of the central actor, already familiar to Americans as a standard element in their native dramatic humor.

In "ACID DROPS," the scene of which is a workhouse ward for women, and the action of which concerns, so far as I can make out, nothing beyond killing time until the long play of the evening is ready, the recommended "tear that should be mixed with comedy" takes the form of one of the usual "sweet old women, optimistic and smiling in the face of pain and adversity." Ah me, how many the time we have attended the dear old nuisances and given ear to their sweet prattle—and laughed at them where we shouldn't! In "ACID DROPS," the old girl's name is Mrs. Gilbert who "do hopes I live till Sunday" but (*smiling*) "I'm not afeard to go, my dears, I'm not afeard to go!" But the real tear, the salt drop *maître d'hôtel*, is yet to come. The old girl, as many a character like her on the stage in days gone by, begins "recollectin'." The Mose Tobani cue. The Maison Blanc cue.

Thus, Mrs. Gilbert: "I mind the days when I was a maid as clear as yesterday. In Kent it were—nigh to Benenden. . . . I mind one day in May month when Jim spoke to me first. 'You're my little lass now, ain't you?' he sez, and I sez, 'Yes, Jim.' There was a wonnerful blue sky that day, I mind, and a great singin' of birds, and the blossoms was somethin' fine. There's not many can remember as fur as that, my dear, nor see the apple orchard as plain as I can now. The Lord's been

wonnerful good to me (Mrs. Gilbert, remember, is in the workhouse) and He'll be the same to you, my dear."

(Let me interrupt a moment here to call your attention to Rule 739 in the "Playwrights' Guide Book," which specifies that sweet old stage ladies must on all occasions employ the phrase "my dear" when addressing their juniors.) But wait, the saline solution of which I have made mention has not yet been coaxed into flow. Are you ready? Then—

MRS. GILBERT—I've been turnin' over just a few things in my mind as I've bin lyin' here; I've been thinkin' over my life's doings, and 'ow wonnerful blessed I've bin. Them that's young and 'asty don't always know the joyfulness of life. When I was a girl I 'ad Jim, but I didn't 'ardly realize it, not till I lost him. We never got married, Jim and me. We was courtin' in the spring, same as I told you—then came the fruit season. We was picking the cherries, Jim and me, and we fell out, and I spoke 'arshly to him. Jim was alwuz quick to take hurt. "Then it's good-bye," he sez to me at last. "You'll never see me no more," he sez, and off he goes down the long road that led to Cranbrook. I wouldn't call after 'im, my dear, for I was 'ard of 'eart those days, but I climbed up to my little bedroom winder that I could see the road from, hopin' he'd come back.

FLORA—And did he?

MRS. GILBERT—No, dearie. He never come back again—never. I looked down that long road many a day, but 'twas all in vain. It giv me a sort of feelin' even now to think of it, tho' Jim's bin dead and gone many a long year. I married in my time, and my man turned out proper enough; but somehow I'm thinkin' it'll be Jim that'll meet me when I've crossed the other side. "You're my little lass now," he'll say, and I'll say, "Yes, Jim." (Pause) I've often wished when I 'ear of young folks falling out that they could 'ear tell of those many times I climbed up to my little winder, for, thinks I, they'd never want to do the like. There, there, my dear, why, you're crying.

Let us pause to dry an eye.

"BETWEEN THE SOUP AND THE SAVOURY" begins rather entertainingly with a scene in the kitchen of a moderately smart English house during the service of dinner, but quickly remembers it is a London curtain-raiser and corrects itself. The "tear in the comedy" here assumes the shape of a plain drab of a slavey who longs vainly to be loved, who is taunted by her servant associates and who, unable longer to endure their gibes, steals the love letters

belonging to the daughter of the house and passes them off as her own. Although a piece of perfectly transparent theatrical manufacture, this little play is the best of the exceedingly bad Jennings packet, its comedy being less forced and its "tear" less aggravated.

But time presses and we must leave Gertrude and her Mrs. Gilbert and her Clarence and her slavey with Gerald and his Sugihara—and proceed to Wilfred T. Coleby's "THE SILVER LINING," which introduces the new Jerome K. Jerome play at the Haymarket. (I shall discuss these new longer pieces next month, unless meanwhile a whim of different nature seize me.) This Mr. Coleby, you will recall, was Edward Knoblauch's collaborator in "The Headmaster." Now, although it is an uncomfortable and profitless duty for a critic to revile and speak ill and find fault to the extent which I have in the present paper—for any critic may sneak out for himself a name for "fairness," "broadness," "sympathy," "impartiality" and all the other intrinsically absurd things of which the public in its critical ignorance talks, by the simple trick of arbitrarily sprinkling his adverse appraisals with pinches of magnanimous allowance and charitable amiability—I am in the sad plight of finding myself at the moment so ridiculously upright that I cannot persuade myself into deceiving you, by the use of the above trick, to rate me higher in your critical estimation than, after reading this paper, you will. Therefore, ho for the catapult and the molten lead!

Mr. Coleby's piece is a jog trot with ennui; a war of words; a Derby day in which a cluster of more or less obvious characterizations race against somnolence. The obtruding fable is of a grasping old woman who blackmails a clergyman out of several pounds and, through paving the way for the institution of a similar stratagem, contrives to match up her daughter with a wealthy young man. The piece is of perfectly patent fabrication; the "comedy" of the mid-Sidney Rosenfeld period; the situations static. The acting of the play is, like the acting of every curtain-raiser

visible in London at the time of writing, worse than merely mediocre.

At the Strand and at Wyndham's, the curtain is hoisted by two bands of minstrels calling themselves, respectively, "THE ENTERTAINERS" and "THE QUAINTS," who make noises with their mouths to the effect that the moon in June is in tune with a spoon, who engage in protracted dialogue as to what street is Watt Street and who, when the electrician throws on the purple lights, put their heads together and conclude with a *sotto voce* barber shop on a "Slumberland" number. At the Apollo, a one-act piece by Mr. Oliphant Down, entitled "THE QUOD WRANGLE," a crudely wrought, slapstick effort but withal the only partly original exhibit of the current British curtain-raising batch. The to-do is of a Cockney tramp, shivering and hungry in his cold tenement quarters, who is approached by an old crony clad in a new suit and with a bit of change rattling in his pocket. The explanation? "Jail," replies the crony. "It's fine there—no work, good bed, good food; and when you leave they give you clothes and some money." The shivering one decides forthwith to go to jail. But how to get in? It is sort of difficult these days. The two scheme. It is finally decided that the aspirant shall steal a piece of meat from the corner butcher. He steals the meat, is promptly arrested, thoughtlessly mumbles something about having been starving and is as promptly released by the sympathetic officer. He tries in still another manner to have himself placed under arrest, but finds it impossible, and at length, desperate in his effort to get into jail, assaults the policeman. The latter now prepares to march him off, when a bystanding suffragette, having nothing better to do for the moment, interests herself in the fellow's case and persuades the officer to let him go. And the end of the matter comes when the poor and still shivering fellow is compelled, as a return for the woman's kindness, to pledge himself to tote a sandwich board extolling the suffragette's cause around the streets of London for eighteen hours a day.

And now we are once again on our annual pilgrimage to the Rue Chaptal and to the Guignol of Max Maurey. A clever soul, this Max, probably the most fertile prestidigitator of the stage amongst us. Time and again I have sat before his tiny *bühne* and marveled at the fellow's placid cunning in the suggestion of effects which the plays bade him create for us out in the auditorium. I have seen him ("S.O.S.") suggest with what was almost a shuddering realism the collision of a giant liner of the seas with an iceberg. And this through the humorously unintricate device of suddenly halting a stagehand in the wings who, up to the moment of the "collision," had with periodic regularity been pounding on the floor with a mallet to suggest the throb of the steamship's engines. I have seen him ("La Porte Close") send the spine into a chill by suggesting the supernatural through the simple trick of causing the door of an empty chamber to be slowly and "mysteriously" pulled ajar by an invisible black thread. I have seen him ("Le Croissant Noir") suggest the dead cold of a winter night by making a slyly taken puff at a cigarette in exhalation appear to be frosted breath. An innocent and somewhat boyish business, all this, true; yet one which, taken in the total of the two hundred and fifty-three plays produced at the Guignol to the present time, amounts to a mastery of the cyclopedia of theatrical effect, a virtuosity in the surface aspects of the acted drama.

But Max has other talents than these. In addition to his abilities as a writer of amiable, if quite inconsequent, small pieces for his playhouse, he is a director of peculiar intelligence and acumen, the precise species of man who might take the dying, broadwayed Princess Theater of New York into his keeping and infuse it with the life that comes of an acquaintanceship with international dramatic literature, an educated viewpoint and the coincident poise of culture. In the matter of actors, Maurey, instead of hiring inefficient clowns and posturers at exaggerated wage, has gathered about him a company of shrewd and able performers

who work in well oiled accord and to electric result. Some actors are born stars, others achieve stardom—and others know a broker. None of this crew for Max. No "stars" for him. Merely capable actors. Look down his list—Ratineau and Viguier and Brizard, Marcelle Barry and Delville and the rest of them—and note the difference.

The current program at the Guignol, however, remains less interesting than any I have hitherto attended. The leading thriller, so termed, is one of the stereotyped Gallic anti-German pulse inflamers. Built by Hellem and d'Estoc from a story by Alphonse Daudet—"THE SIEGE OF BERLIN"—the affair discloses the aged Colonel Jouve, a veteran of the First Empire, suffering mental tortures over the French defeats of 1870. So acute are the old soldier's feelings that his granddaughter lies to him as the German troops continue their relentless advance upon Paris. Even when news comes to the girl that her own father has fallen before the enemy's guns, she fights back the tears and laughs out her deceits of new tricolored triumphs. MacMahon, she tells Jouve, is at the gates of Berlin even as the Germans are storming Paris. The old soldier hears the turmoil in the streets below and takes it as a token of the people's rejoicing. He rushes to the window as the brass music of what he believes to be a victorious army comes nearer and nearer. He seizes a flag, steps out on the balcony, starts to lift his voice, beholds the passing Prussian uniforms—and falls back dead of shock.

As will be observed, a sad, a sweet tale. Why will the French not get over their fondness for these hysterical military nonsenses in their theaters? Why this persistent and humorless baiting of the poor Germans, this rousing of the mob against the helpless *Der-die-das*? As I have sought to point out in my two volumes, "Les Etudes Militaires" (see Vol. I, Chapter XXXII, "Le Coup des Sabres"; Vol. II, Chapter XLIV, "Le Rire Sous Cape Français et L'Attaque de Hinkelhausen"), the present superiority of the French fighting forces over the German is so incontrovertible that

these French theatrical exhibitions must be regarded as an exposition of very bad taste. The second "thriller" is called "VERS LA LUMIÈRE," or "Toward the Light," and is the work of Paul Carrière out of a fiction by Lenormand. The quiver is imparted through the spectacle of a villainously bearded, dagger-eyed rajah luring several British army officers to death in a pit of quicksand. The picture of the major, in particular, sinking gradually in the swallowing slime, going struggling and gurgling to his end, is a pleasant one, nicely contrived and properly cajoling to the vertebrae.

"MIRETTE A SES RAISONS," or "Mirette Has Her Reasons," is a rather typical Parisian tidbit by Romain Coolus, of the sort known to visiting American schoolteachers as "spicy." The trouble with Mr. Coolus' little piece is in the circumstance that his entire "plot" lies in one line, and that once that particular line is spoken, nothing remains to the play. Mirette, though domiciled in the quarters of her chief lover, Fred, is in the habit of liaisoning clandestinely with Fred's friend, Albert. Fred discovers what has been going on and—then the line. Mirette sweetly confides to him that she is terribly superstitious, that she already has had a dozen lovers, and that if her dear Fred had remained the thirteenth it would have been awfully unlucky, so, *mon cher zigue*, she took on Albert in order that misfortune might not befall her beloved him. And of course Fred, as any true lover would, begs her forgive him for his rude doubts as to her virtue. The outline of the piece has a more entrancing air than the play in actual movement. Whatever his play's deficiencies, it must be admitted, however, that Coolus has devised a more ingenious defense for adultery than did two of the stellar pioneers in that direction of dramatic theme, Marsten ("The Dutch Courtezan," 1605) and George Lillo ("The Merchant of London," 1731).

Here, the kind of play that in England and America would be dubbed "immoral." Your Anglo-Saxon regards as "immoral" any play in which a loose woman does not account for the fact of

her unchastity in one of four specific ways:

1. That she "was very young and innocent and knew nothing of the world and believed him."

2. That she "had trusted him (he was so kind to her) and had believed him when he told her their marriage was legal."

3. That "he had taken her by the hand and promised to marry her immediately the divorce was granted."

4. That "she didn't know, she didn't know what she was doing—it's all like a terrible dream—and then—one day, one day word came to her that he, that he had been—lost at sea."

Your Anglo-Saxon refuses to admit to himself that any condition of affairs other than these may explain a lady's dereliction or derelictions from the path of continence and, as a consequence, pretends to a seizure of shock when visited with a theme which dares suggest that a lady's appetite for cardons à la Savoyarde and for sex may be generically of quite the same normal, matter of fact and undramatic nature. In addition to this point of view, there is, patently, another reason for the Anglo-Saxon attitude toward French farce of the class typified by the *Coolus* piece. The oft repeated epigram of Walpole to the effect that life is a comedy to the man who thinks and a tragedy to the man who feels is here in good point: for, in personal matters of sex, your Anglo-Saxon feels where your Frenchman thinks. Your Anglo-Saxon is a very sentimental fellow when it comes to a view of sex. (Hence his unattractiveness and lack of appeal to women as compared with your Frenchman.)

This trite and obvious difference in personal attitude on the part of the Anglo-Saxon and the Gaul easily explains away a portion of the theatrical side of the sex thing. But still another relevant theatrical phase of the question obtrudes, a phase that has been approached by one who is probably the best of British dramatic critics since Shaw, Mr. John Palmer of the *Saturday Review*. Observes he:

"Either," says the Frenchman, 'I will

think about life and write a comedy; or I will feel about life and write a tragedy. But,' the Frenchman insists, 'I will not do these things simultaneously.' . . . The Englishman's difficulty is precisely the reverse. He point blank refuses to be departmental."

Mr. Palmer has further analyzed the situation in a skillful essay in this fashion:

"If sex be not comically treated in the fashion of Gargantua's birth, we are driven next to the modern way of the Palais Royal. We have only to understand why seventeenth century England and modern France have perfectly succeeded in this particular comic vein to realize why English authors today (Mr. Palmer might truthfully include American authors) invariably fail. The comedy of sex in this kind rests, roughly, upon an assumption which no good modern Englishman writing for the modern English theater dare honestly and without veiling accept—the assumption that men and women are polygamous by nature and monogamous by necessity. If this assumption is to be taken as a joke and lead to laughter, we must clearly avoid anything in the way of emotion or romance. The comic treatment of sex in social comedy must be passionless. In a comedy of sex there must be no sex feeling. . . . Breaches of the seventh commandment are only funny so long as they are never serious. This may sound like a pleonasm; but it is rarely realized by English authors who write the modern comedy of sex."

In the main, reasonable words, but Mr. Palmer, like the authors with whom he here deals, is an Englishman; and must we not bear in mind the possibility that an English critic may unconsciously suffer from native traces of the same deplorable Anglo-Saxonism which he lays against those other Englishmen he criticizes? It would seem to me, who am no Englishman, that the idea that breaches of No. 7 are only humorous so long as they are never serious is too characteristically British—and, hence, largely preposterous. Can it be that my admirable colleague has never seen or read the excellent German

and Austrian pieces in which breaches of the species in point are at once serious and genuinely funny? Happy comedies of sex, like Schmidt's, for example, in which there *is* sex feeling? Happy comedies and farcical comedies like those of Schnitzler, in which there *is* emotion and romance? Is it possible that the good Palmer is, *au fond*, something of a sentimentalist and blue stocking?

In another of the farces on the Guignol bill there is uncovered a comic theatrical idea which somehow has gone wrong in the writing. The piece bears the title "LA CLEF SOUS LA PORTE" ("The Key Under the Door") and comes from André Mycho. Briefly, the tale is of a burglar who, entering a store in the dark of night, overhears the owner, who is on the edge of bankruptcy, making ready with his wife to skip out and give the tail to his creditors. The burglar hides until the twain have disappeared, then goes to bed for the night and in the morning opens up the shop on his own account, elaborately placarding the place with sensational announcements as to a "cost price sale." Customers by the score now pour into the shop where before no one entered, and fight to pay the burglar more for their purchases than the prices which had been marked on them before the burglar put up the "cost price" bulletins. And, when the owner returns, he is so astonished and gratified at the thief's cleverness as an honest tradesman that, instead of turning him over to the police, he decides to take him into partnership. A variation of the "Fortune Hunter," "Along Came Ruth," *u. s. w.* theme. The slapstick has replaced wit to such a degree in the editing of the piece, however, that the whimsy of the burglar idea is cracked over the head every time it rises to the surface.

The other specimens are a comedy by Elie de Bassan called "LES OPÉRATIONS DU PROFESSEUR VERDIER" ("The Operations of Professor Verdier"), an

exposition of the susceptibility of a soft-hearted fellow in the way of being imposed upon by his patients and clients; and a farce by Max himself called "Depuis Six Mois" ("After Six Months"), a trifle about an unruly domestic after the manner of Max's piece of last year, "Rosalie," which I described to you at the time.

This paper has been, in part, on British one-act plays, and in it has been a reference to Palmer, dramatic critic to the *Review*. Of the many English enacters I have engaged with in the last handful of years, one of the best is to the credit of this same critic. Produced originally a couple of seasons ago and given the title "OVER THE HILLS," Palmer's play is a delightfully written, keenly witty study of a man in the late changes of life, reminiscent in a general way of Bahr's gorgeous "Concert," and in its own way not a whit the less engaging and penetrating. The characterization of the aging Robert Wilde, one-time world vagabond, who longs again to travel the highroad of adventure, and the characterization of Helen, the commonplace, understanding wife who, appreciating his restlessness, urges him to leave her, knowing full well he'll be only too quick to hurry back out of the rain and cold to his slippered grate fire, are drawn with humorous tact and real dramatic art. This little play, indeed, is such a good one of its kind that, inasmuch as it therefore will probably never be produced in the American theater, I recommend you order it in its book form and read it. Sidgwick and Jackson have done the printing job and the price is sixpence—12½ cents—the price of a bad cigar.

A vision of the full-length plays at present engaging London audiences causes me to repeat for the hundredth time that the English-speaking theater as a whole must look largely to Hungary and to Germany if it would seek to interest, to refresh and to amuse its less rectangular-headed clients.



ADVENTURES AMONG THE NEW NOVELS

By H. L. Mencken

AFTER all, Dr. Munyon is quite right: there is yet hope. Sometimes, of course, it is hard to discern, almost impossible to embrace. Sweating through the best-sellers of the moment, shot from the presses in a gaudy cataract, one can scarcely escape a mood of intense depression, a bleak esthetic melancholia. What is to become of a nation which buys such imbecile books by the hundred thousand, and not only buys them, but reads them, and not only reads them, but enjoys them, gabbles about them, takes them seriously, even pays reverence to them as literature?

Publishers get rich printing that sort of "literature," and then use their money to bludgeon and browbeat all authors who try to do anything better. Imagine a young American bobbing up with a new "Germinal," or a new "Lord Jim," or a new "Brothers Karamazov": what a job he would have getting it between covers! But let him rise shamelessly out of the old bog of mush, dripping honey and buttermilk, and at once there is silver in his palm and praise in his ear. The Barabbases fight for him, playing one another all kinds of sharp tricks; the newspapers record his amours, his motor accidents and his table talk; the literary monthlies print his portrait (in golf togs) opposite that of Gerhart Hauptmann; the women's clubs forget Bergson and the white slave trade to study his style. In the end, he retires to Palm Beach or Tuscany with a fortune, and so becomes a romantic legend, half genius and half god.

But, as I started out to say, there is

yet a glimmer of hope. A small class of more civilized readers begins to show itself here and there; a few daring publishers risk a dollar or two on fiction of an appreciably better sort; the literary monthlies forget their mutttons long enough to say a kind word for Joseph Conrad; now and then a genuine artist is seen in the offing. Fate, alas, conspires with stupidity to keep the number down. Frank Norris died just as he was getting into his stride; David Graham Phillips was murdered by a lunatic at the very moment of his deliverance; a dozen others, after diffident bows, have disappeared in ways just as mysterious. But there remains Theodore Dreiser, patient, forthright, earnest, plodding, unswerving, uncompromising—and so long as Dreiser keeps out of jail there will be hope.

Four long novels are now behind him, and in every one of them one sees the same grim fidelity to an austere artistic theory, the same laborious service to a stern and rigorous faith. That faith may be put briefly into two articles: (a) that it is the business of a novelist to describe human beings as they actually are, unemotionally, objectively and relentlessly, and not as they might be, or would like to be, or ought to be; and (b) that his business is completed when he has so described them, and he is under no obligation to read copybook morals into their lives, or to estimate their virtue (or their lack of it) in terms of an ideal goodness. In brief, the art of Dreiser is almost wholly representative, detached, aloof, unethical: he makes no attempt whatever to provide that pious

glow, that mellow sentimentality, that soothing escape from reality, which Americans are accustomed to seek and find in prose fiction. And despite all the enormous advantages of giving them what they are used to and cry for, he has stuck resolutely to his program. In the fourteen years since "Sister Carrie" he has not deviated once, nor compromised once. There are his books: you may take them or leave them. If you have any respect for an artist who has respect for himself, you may care to look into them; if not, you may go to the devil.

In all this, Dreiser runs on a track parallel to Conrad's; the two men suggest each other in a score of ways. Superficially, of course, they may seem to be far apart: the gorgeous colors of Conrad are never encountered in Dreiser. But that difference lies almost wholly in materials; in ideas and methods they are curiously alike. To each the salient fact of life is its utter meaninglessness, its sordid cruelty, its mystery. Each stands in amazement before the human tendency to weigh it, to motivate it, to see esoteric significances in it. Nothing could be more profoundly agnostic and unmoral than Conrad's "Lord Jim" or Dreiser's "Jennie Gerhardt." In neither book is there the slightest suggestion of a moral order of the world; neither novelist has any blame to hand out, nor any opinion to offer as to the justice or injustice of the destiny he describes. It is precisely here, indeed, that both take their departure from the art of fiction as we of English speech commonly know it. They are wholly emancipated from the moral obsession that afflicts our race; they see the human comedy as a series of inexplicable and unrepresentative phenomena, and not at all as a mere allegory and Sunday school lesson. If art be imagined as a sort of halfway station between science and morals, their faces are plainly turned toward the hard rocks of science, just as the faces of the more orthodox novelists are turned toward pansy beds of morals.

Conrad tells us somewhere that it was Flaubert who helped him to formulate his theory of the novel, with Turgenieff and the other Russians as-

sisting. The influences that moulded Dreiser are not to be stated with such certainty. Here and there one happens upon what seem to be obvious tracks of Zola, but Dreiser, if I remember rightly, has said that he knows the Frenchman only at second hand. Did the inspiration come through Frank Norris, Zola's one avowed disciple in America? Against the supposition stands the fact that "Sister Carrie" followed too soon after "McTeague" to be an imitation of it—and besides, "Sister Carrie" is a far greater novel, in more than one way, than "McTeague" itself. Perhaps some earlier and lesser work of Norris's was the model that the younger man followed, consciously or unconsciously. Norris was his discoverer, and in a sense, his patron saint, battling for him valiantly when the firm of Doubleday, Page & Co. achieved immortality by suppressing "Sister Carrie." (Some day the whole of this tale must be told. The part that Norris played proved that he was not only a sound critic, but also an extraordinarily courageous and unselfish friend.) But whatever the fact and the process, Dreiser has kept the faith far better than Norris, whose later work, particularly "The Octopus," shows a disconcerting mingling of honest realism and vaporous mysticism. In Dreiser there has been no such yielding. His last book, "THE TITAN," is cut from exactly the same cloth that made "Sister Carrie." Despite years of critical hammering and misunderstanding, and a number of attacks of a sort even harder to bear, he has made no sacrifice of his convictions and done no treason to his artistic conscience. He may be right or he may be wrong, but at all events he has gone straight ahead.

"THE TITAN" (Lane), like "Sister Carrie," enjoys the honor of having been suppressed after getting into type. This time the virtuous act was performed by Harper & Brothers, a firm which provided mirth for the mocking back in the nineties by refusing the early work of Rudyard Kipling. The passing years work strange farces. Today the American publisher of Kipling

is the firm of Doubleday, Page & Co., which suppressed "Sister Carrie"—and "Sister Carrie," after years upon the town, is now on the vestal list of the Harpers, who bucked at "THE TITAN"! The grotesque comedy should have been completed by the publication of the latter work by Doubleday, Page & Co., but of this delectable fourth act we were unluckily deprived. Life, alas, is seldom quite artistic. Its phenomena do not fit snugly together, like squares in a checkerboard. But nevertheless the whole story of the adventures of his books would make a novel in Dreiser's best manner—a novel without the slightest hint of a moral. His own career as an artist has been full of the blind and unmeaning fortuitousness that he expounds.

But what of "THE TITAN" as a work of art? To me, at least, it comes closer to what I conceive to be Dreiser's ideal than any other story he has done. Here, at last, he has thrown overboard all the usual baggage of the novelist, making short and merciless shrift of "heart interest," "sympathy" and even romance. In "Sister Carrie" there was still a sop, however little intended, for the sentimentalists: if they didn't like the history of Carrie as a study of the blind forces which determine human destiny, they could wallow in it as a sad, sad love story. Carrie was pathetic, appealing, melting; she moved, like Marguerite Gautier, in an atmosphere of agreeable melancholy. And Jennie Gerhardt, of course, was merely another Carrie—a Carrie more carefully and objectively drawn, perhaps, but still one to be easily mistaken for a "sympathetic" heroine of the best-sellers. Readers jumped from "The Prisoner of Zenda" to "Jennie Gerhardt" without knowing that they were jumping ten thousand miles. The tear jugs were there to cry into; the machinery seemed to be the same. Even in "The Financier" there was still a hint of familiar things. The first Mrs. Cowperwood was sorely put upon; Cowperwood himself suffered injustice, and pined away in a dungeon.

But no one, I venture to say, will ever

make the same mistake about "THE TITAN"—no one, not even the youngest and fairest, will ever take it for a sentimental romance. Not a single appeal to the emotions is in it; it is a purely intellectual account, as devoid of heroics as a death certificate, of a strong man's savage endeavors to live out his life as it pleases him, regardless of all the subtle and enormous forces that seek to break him to a rule. There is nothing in him of the conventional outlaw; he does not wear a red sash and bellow for liberty; from end to end he issues no melodramatic defiance of the existing order. The salient thing about him is precisely his avoidance of all such fine feathers and sonorous words. He is no hero at all, but merely an extraordinary gamester—sharp, merciless, tricky, insatiable. One stands amazed before his marvelous resourcefulness and daring, his absolute lack of conscience, but there is never the slightest effort to cast a romantic glamour over him, to raise sympathy for him, to make it appear that he is misunderstood, unfortunate, persecuted. Even in love he is devoid of the old glamour of the lover. Even in disaster he asks for no quarter, no generosity, no compassion. Up or down, he is sufficient unto himself.

The man is the same Cowperwood who came a cropper in "The Financier," but he has now reached middle age, and all the faltering weakness and irresolutions of his youth are behind him. He knows exactly what he wants, and in the Chicago of the early eighties he proceeds to grab it. The town is full of other fellows with much the same aspirations, but Cowperwood has the advantage over them that he has already fallen off his wall and survived, and so he lacks that sneaking fear of consequences which holds them in check. In brief, they are brigands with one eye on the *posse comitatus*, while he is a brigand with both eyes on the swag. The result, as may be imagined, is a combat truly homeric in its proportions—a combat in which associated orthodoxy in rapine is pitted against the most fantastic and astounding heterodoxy. The street railways of Chicago are the

prize, and Cowperwood fights for control of them with all the ferocity of a hungry hyena and all the guile of a middle-aged serpent. His devices are staggering and unprecedented, even in that town of surprises. He makes a trial of every crime in the calendar of roguery, from blackmail to downright pillage. And though, in the end, he is defeated in his main purpose, for the enemy takes the cars, he is yet so far successful that he goes away with a lordly share of the profits, and leaves behind him a memory like that of a man-eating tiger in an Indian village.

A mere hero of melodrama? A brother to Monte Cristo and Captain Kidd? A play-acting superman, stalking his gorgeous heights? Far from it, indeed. The very charm of the man, as I have hinted before, lies in his utter lack of obvious charm. He is not sentimental. He is incapable of attitudinizing. He makes no bid for that homage which goes to the conscious outlaw, the devil-of-a-fellow. Even in his amours, which are carried on as boldly and as copiously as his chicaneries, there is no hint of the barbered Don Juan, the professional scourge of virtue. Cowperwood pursues women unmorally, almost innocently. He seduces the wives and daughters of friends and enemies alike; there is seldom any conscious purpose to dramatize and romanticize the adventure. Women are attractive to him simply because they represent difficulties to be surmounted, problems to be solved, personalities to be brought into subjection, and he in his turn is attractive to women simply because he transcends all that they know, or think they know, of men. There must be at least a dozen different maids and wives in his story, and in one way or another they all contribute to his final defeat, but there is nothing approaching a grand affair. At no time is a woman hunt the principal business before him. At no time does one charmer blind him to all others. Even at the close, when we see him genuinely smitten, an easy fatalism still conditions his eagerness, and he waits with unflagging patience for the victory that finally rewards him.

Such a man, described romantically, would be undistinguishable from the wicked earls and seven-foot guardsmen of Ouida and the Duchess. But described realistically, with all that wealth of minute and apparently inconsequential detail which Dreiser piles up so amazingly, he becomes a figure astonishingly vivid, lifelike and engrossing. He fits into no *a priori* theory of conduct or scheme of rewards and punishments; he proves nothing and teaches nothing; the motives which move him are never obvious and frequently unintelligible. But in the end he seems genuinely a man—a man of the sort that we see about us in the real world—not a transparent and simple fellow, reacting docilely according to a formula, but a bundle of complexities and contradictions, a creature oscillating between the light and the shadow, a unique and, at bottom, inexplicable personality. It is here that Dreiser gets farthest from the wallowed rut of fiction. The Cowperwood he puts before us is not the two-dimensional cut-out, the facile jumping jack, of the ordinary novel, but a being of three dimensions and innumerable planes—in brief, the impenetrable mystery that is man. The makers of best-sellers, if they could imagine him at all, would seek to account for him, explain him, turn him into a moral (*i.e.*, romantic) equation. Dreiser is content to describe him.

Naturally enough, the lady reviewers of the newspapers have been wholly flabbergasted by the book. Unable to think of a character in a novel save in terms of the characters in other novels, they have sought to beplaster Cowperwood with the old, old labels. He is the Wealthy Seducer, the Captain of Industry, the Natural Polygamist, the Corruptionist, the Franchise Grabber, the Bribe Giver, the Plutocrat, the Villain. Some of them, intelligent enough to see that not one of these labels actually fits, have interpreted the fact as a proof of Dreiser's incapacity. He is denounced for creating a Cowperwood who is not like other capitalists, not like other lawbreakers, not like other voluptuaries—that is to say, not

like the capitalists, lawbreakers and voluptuaries of Harold MacGrath, E. Phillips Oppenheim and Richard Harding Davis. And one hears, too, the piping voice of outraged virtue: a man who chases women in his leisure and captures a dozen or so in twenty years is ungentlemanly, un-American, indecent—and therefore ought not to be put into a book. But I do not think that Dreiser is going to be stopped by such piffle, nor even by the more damaging attacks of smug and preposterous publishers. He has stuck to his guns through thick and thin, and he is going to stick to them to the end of the chapter. And soon or late, unless I err very grievously, he is going to reap the just reward of a sound and courageous artist, just as George Meredith reaped it before him, and Joseph Conrad is beginning to reap it even now.

Frank Norris's "VANDOVER AND THE BRUTE" (*Doubleday-Page*) is brought forth with needless and dangerous apologies. It was written back in 1895, during a hiatus in the composition of "McTeague," and the manuscript was put in storage in San Francisco, where it disappeared at the time of the earthquake and was not recovered until a few months ago. One Charles G. Norris, apparently the novelist's brother, tells the story in a preface to the book, and is full of theories as to how Norris would have improved it had he lived to take up the task. The same note of deprecation is repeated in the canned review. Why be at such pains to make the reader look for defects? Why say so plainly that the book is not up to the mark? As a matter of fact, it is one of the very best novels that Norris ever wrote, ranking but little below "McTeague" itself, and there are not four novelists in the United States today who could do anything so good, nor even anything half so good. It is clearly conceived, ingeniously thought out and eloquently written. Its incidents are interesting; its people are lifelike; its style is excellent. What more could one ask for?

"VANDOVER AND THE BRUTE" was written at a time when Norris was com-

pletely under the spell of Zola, and traces of the great Frenchman's influence are all over it. Its central idea, in fact, is so much like that of the Rougon-Macquart series that it seems a sort of American appendix. Young Vandover (I don't think his given name ever appears: he is always called Van) is a fellow of artistic leanings, the only son of a moderately well-to-do San Francisco builder. The dramatic conflict which shapes his life and makes the story is one that is very common in men of his talents and station. On the one hand, he is urged to austerity and industry by a genuine artistic impulse, an insatiable longing for self-expression; and on the other hand, he is lured into easy and dangerous ways by the appetites of the flesh. It is not long, alas, before we see which way the pull is the stronger. The brute gradually conquers the man. Vandover gives less and less time to his painting: his days are devoted to laborious idleness; his nights are filled by women and drink. Once started downward, he goes swiftly. Sharks of one sort or another gobble his patrimony; he finds it increasingly difficult to work; the friends of his youth drop away from him; he takes to idiotic gambling in a vain effort to regain his position; his health begins to yield to dissipation. The last view we have of him shows him on his knees, a boozy and filthy creature, scrubbing floors at a dollar a day.

The story is written, as I have said, with the same unfailing plausibility and address that made "McTeague" so notable a contribution to American letters. You will not find in it any evidence of a striving for effect; the narrative seems to unroll naturally, artlessly, almost spontaneously. And yet there is art of the highest sort in every chapter of it, and the big scenes are done with a degree of skill that even Norris seldom surpassed. Turn, for example, to the place where Vandover discovers that he has finally lost his grip, that he has forgotten how to draw, that his painting has become a mere dream—or to the episode of his attempt at suicide, a tragic farce worthy of Sudermann—or to

the last scene of all, with its overwhelming degradation, its moving hopelessness. Believe me, the man who did these things was one whose memory we should hold in eternal respect. He had gone farther, at thirty years, than any other American novelist had ever gone before him; in the midst of a romantic revival unmatched for bathos he was striking telling blows for the truth as he saw it. And with it all he was something of a romanticist himself, as every great realist always is. He could see the beauty in common things; he could understand simple and kindly folk; he was full of that health of spirit and feeling which is, after all, the best heritage of the American people. One finds it incarnate in certain American women of the middle class—women who are intelligent and yet charming, good friends and yet good mates. Norris drew more than one such woman to the life. One of them was Travis Bessemer, in "Blix"—that forgotten challenge to the sentimentalists. Vandover's girl, Turner Ravis, is another.

The flesh and the spirit fight out another great fight in "MIDSTREAM," by Will Levington Comfort (*Doran*). Comfort is a novelist who has constantly told tales out of his own life. Here he drops even the outward semblance of fiction, and deals frankly in autobiography. The result is a very curious piece of self-revelation, as interesting as it is honest. And what sort of man emerges from the story? Briefly described, an almost perfect example of the chronic emotionalist, the incurable extremist. The life of every man, of course, follows a zigzag course, with peaks of achievement and aspiration and valleys of disaster and despair. But in most of us the swing remains moderate throughout: it is not so vast a tumble, after all, from our highest heaven to our deepest hell. There remains, however, what may be called the Loyola type of man, and in him the swing is enormous. He lacks entirely that complex of inhibitions which we variously denominate self-restraint, fastidiousness or common sense. He is oscillating forever between an extravagant asceticism on the one

hand and an equally extravagant hog-gishness on the other. When he is good he is very, very good, and when he is bad he is horrid.

The life of Comfort, viewed in retrospect at thirty-five, seems to have been that of scores of other clever and eager young Americans, but with all of its shadows deepened to a melodramatic blackness and all of its high lights made blinding. A newspaper reporter at the gate of the twenties, he responded violently to all the opportunities and immunities of that feverish trade. He was a hind set loose, an overgrown child running amuck. Was it the custom of the craft to seek inspiration in ethyl alcohol, to practise a light-hearted polygamy? Then Comfort, the extremist, jumped head first into the alcohol and converted a careless amorousness into a series of grandiose and nerve-wracking intrigues. Did every young reporter dream of reporting wars, of becoming a Richard Harding Davis, of getting his photograph upon boudoir dressing tables? Then Comfort, on a shoestring, went galloping to the front, beating his way with incredible impudence, creating for himself a host of romantic difficulties, throwing himself into dangers in the manner of a maniac. The whole scene of these early exploits drips with blood and booze. The world, to that inordinate youngster, was a sort of Fuller Fisher's boarding house, a mixture of barroom, brothel and shambles.

And what of the man that emerged at last, weary of such gargantuan excesses? What of the Comfort of today? No need to describe him at length: I have told you about him several times of late, reviewing certain of his novels. Once so tremendously of the earth earthy, he now puts all reality behind him and disports himself with the arch-angels. His philosophy, starting from gross materialism, has become transformed into an attenuated and incomprehensible mysticism. His occupation is the worship of a gaseous goddess that he calls Mystic Motherhood—the psychical mystery purged of the physical fact. He sees visions of a universe set free from the chains of the flesh, of a

race denaturalized and ineffable. Mere words? Windy buncombe? Sound without sense? I am sure of it. And what is more, I see certain saving reservations and backslidings in Comfort himself. He has not got so far into the ether that he has forgotten the joys of a jag, the taste of kisses, the smell of smoke. One detects him, now and then, looking backward sentimentally. One discerns in him a Casanova-like relish for past deviltries, even a touch of pride in them. And so, after a fashion, he still keeps his feet upon the ground.

Novels innumerable, and, strangely enough, many of them excellent. Over Booth Tarkington's "PENROD" (*Double-day-Page*) I needn't do much lingering; everybody seems to have read it, and everybody seems to have been delighted with it. It is, in truth, an amazingly accurate and amusing picture of a small boy, and so it is bound to make friends, for youth is the one genuine fairyland of the world, and all of us are grateful to the magician who can lead us back to it. But it has this additional merit: that the boy it sets before us is a city boy, and of parents reasonably well-to-do, and so he comes a bit closer to most of us than the barefoot youngsters of other books. Even Huck Finn, for all his perfect boyishness, yet fails to fit into memory as we would like. Huck never saw a fire engine; his life was not conditioned by a concrete policeman on the corner; it is not recorded that he ever had a girl; worse still—and mystery of mysteries!—he didn't have a dog. In all these departments, at least, Penrod Schofield is better outfitted. To put ourselves into Huck's place requires a definite effort of the imagination; to put ourselves into Penrod's requires only an easy looking backward. The things he does quickly amalgamate with the things that we and our kind used to do. He begins as a strange boy from the next neighborhood; he ends as a member of the old gang, as real as any other.

Owen Johnson's "THE SALAMANDER" (*Bobbs-Merrill*) is another book that seems to be making a stir, but as for me, I can find nothing in it to raise the pulse. That there is a variety of prostitute

who retains her physical virtue cannot be news to any man who has faced the hazards of life in a large city. The breed is familiar, in fact, on the musical comedy stage, and the name of "salamander" is commonly applied there to a chorus girl who has sense enough to know that the sort of satyr who pursues her kind is always an arrant sentimentalist at bottom, with a superstitious reverence for what he calls the "good" woman. Mr. Johnson's salamander, Doré Baxter, is not exactly of the stage, but she hangs on its borders and radiates something of its glamour. Various gentlemen try to seduce her—a great newspaper editor, a famous money king, a young judge, a more or less vague group of men-about-town. But she resists them all, playing one against another, and finally enters into lawful wedlock with a millionaire ex-tank. An air of superficiality marks the story. One reads page after page about Doré and her friends without getting much beneath their skins. They remain characters in a novel to the end.

"THE FORTUNATE YOUTH," by William J. Locke (*Lane*), is a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* of the Lockean formula. Here, indeed, we have "whimsical" sentiment that degenerates into mere mush. There is no humor in the book and there is no sense. In such things as "Septimus," "Simon the Jester" and "The Glory of Clementina" Locke showed ingenuity in the creation of fantastic characters and bizarre situations, but all he does in this latest book is to outfit the ancient story of the lost heir with a caste of stuffed dummies. I have found the book abominably tedious and irritating. Nor is there anything worth recording in "ARIADNE OF ALLAN WATER," by Sidney McCall (*Little-Brown*), or in "DIANE OF THE GREEN VAN," by Leona Dalrymple (*Reilly-Britton*), or in "FIVE YEARS TO FIND OUT," by I. A. R. Wylie (*Bobbs-Merrill*), or in "THE SULTANA," by Henry C. Rowland (*Dodd-Mead*), four stories which hold fast to the commonplace, the obvious, the timeworn stock-in-trade of the romancer. Nor is there much save a facile style in "FOOL OF

APRIL," by Justin Huntley McCarthy (*Lane*), the 3,456th novel since the year 1850 to deal with an eccentric will. Nor in "NORTH OF FIFTY-THREE," by Bertrand W. Sinclair (*Little-Brown*), another of the endless romances of the Canadian Northwest, with the usual rough diamond of a hero.

Better stuff is in "PUNCH AND JUDY," by Edwin Pugh (*Bobbs-Merrill*), a tale of the London of artistic and sociological "tendencies" and "movements" — a book swarming with odd characters and full of lively talk. And in "THE GOLDFISH," by some fictioneer who prefers to remain anonymous (*Century*). Here the doddering platitude that wealth does not bring happiness is supported so ingeniously and entertainingly that it becomes almost respectable. There is civilized diversion, too, in "THE WOMEN WE MARRY," by Arthur Stanwood Pier (*Houghton-Mifflin*), a study of the temperamental cannibalism made necessary by our archaic monogamy, and in "FLORIAN MAYR," by Ernst von Wolzogen (*Huebsch*), an extremely amusing picture of musical society in modern Germany, where musicians are taken quite as seriously as stockbrokers in the United States, and in "LIFE IS A DREAM," by Richard Curle (*Doubleday-Page*), a collection of short stories showing a delicate and agreeable fancy and rising considerably above the rough-hewn trade goods of the magazines. And so to a lot of novels of middling merit, neither good enough for loud and reckless praise nor bad enough to be passed over in silence: "FELICIDAD," by Rowland Thomas (*Little-Brown*), a romance of the drowsy tropics; "HENRY OF NAVARRE, OHIO," by Holworthy Hall (*Century*), a brisk comedy of love; "OH, MR. BIDGOOD!" by Peter Blundell (*Lane*), a nautical farce with original touches; "E," by Julian Hinckley (*Duffield*), a satirical tale of high society in These States; and "HOME," by one

unnamed (*Century*), a fictional setting of the late John Howard Payne's w. k. *lied*, written in so workmanlike a way that several w. k. novelists immediately come under suspicion.

Browsing through these books, I have found entertainment which involves no damage to self-respect. In every one of them there is this virtue or that; the worst of them is easily readable. And there is the same sort of mild praiseworthiness in such things as "UNTO CÆSAR," by the Baroness Orczy (*Doran*); an honest effort to give us a whooping melodrama of Imperial Rome, with Caius Julius Cæsar Caligula on the throne, and the poor Christians having a hot time of it; and in "GRANNIE," by Mrs. George Wemyss (*Macmillan*), the charming story of a dear old lady who escapes the loneliness of age by keeping up an eager sympathy with youth; and in "IDLE WIVES," by James Oppenheim (*Century*), the story of a discontented wife who seeks surcease of sorrow in the uplift, but comes home again when her husband becomes a vice crusader; and in "THE HOUR OF CONFLICT," by Hamilton Gibbs (*Doran*), the story of a young man who loves lightly and then repents very heavily, but is restored to happiness (somewhat incredibly, alas!) in the end; and in "NEW MEN FOR OLD," by Howard Vincent O'Brien (*Kennerley*), and "WHAT A MAN WANTS," by Charles Marriott (*Bobbs-Merrill*), two novels in which serious messages to humanity, neither of them quite convincing, are sugar-coated with fiction.

More novels remain, but I regret to report that I have but two eyes and have thus failed to get through them. But even so, there is no cause for repining. A month which brings forth two such stories as "The Titan" and "Vandover and the Brute" and a round dozen respectable second-raters — certainly such a month is one that yields a very fair usufruct.



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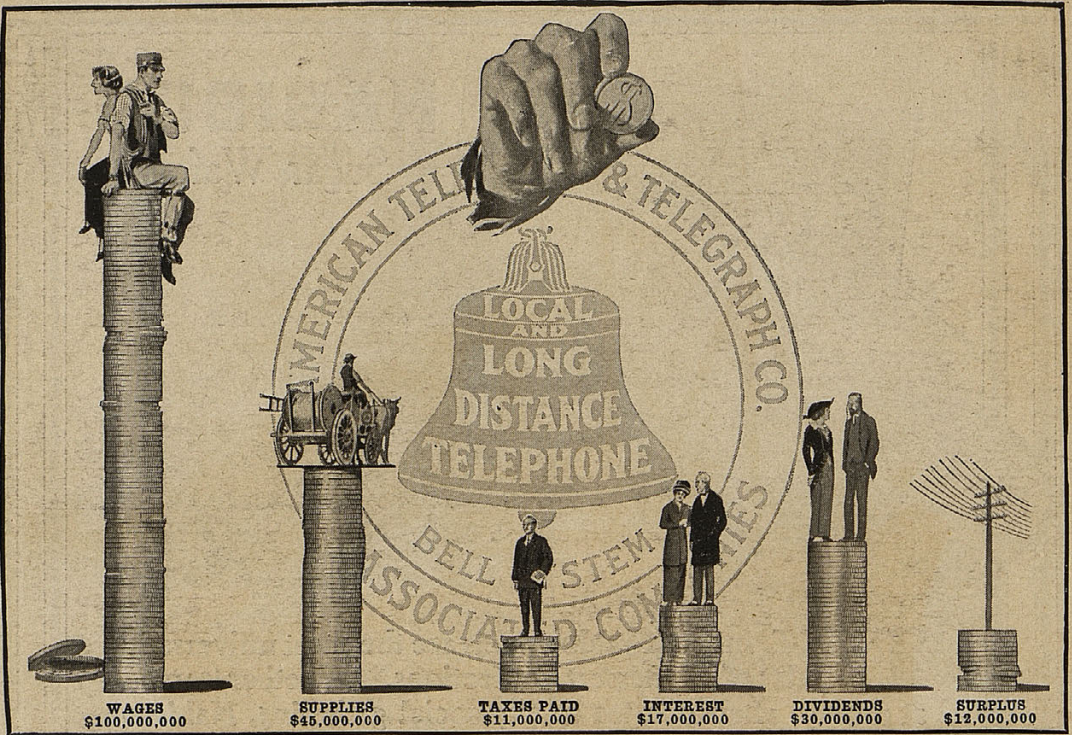
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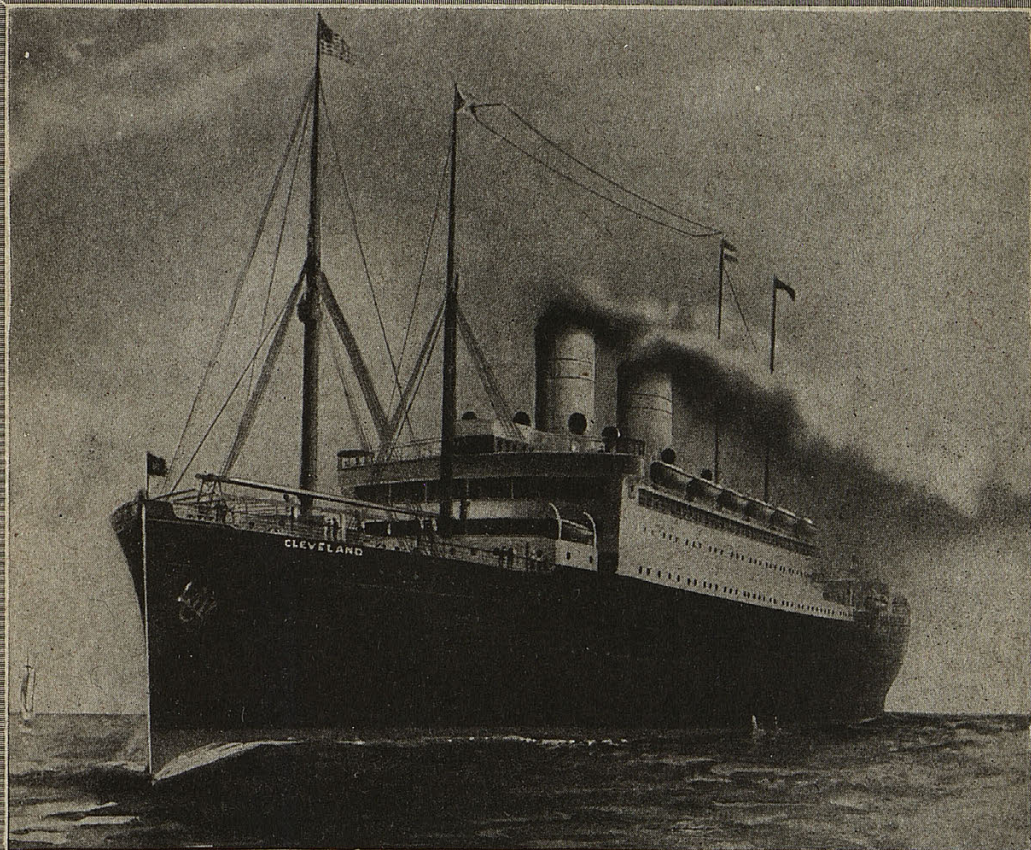
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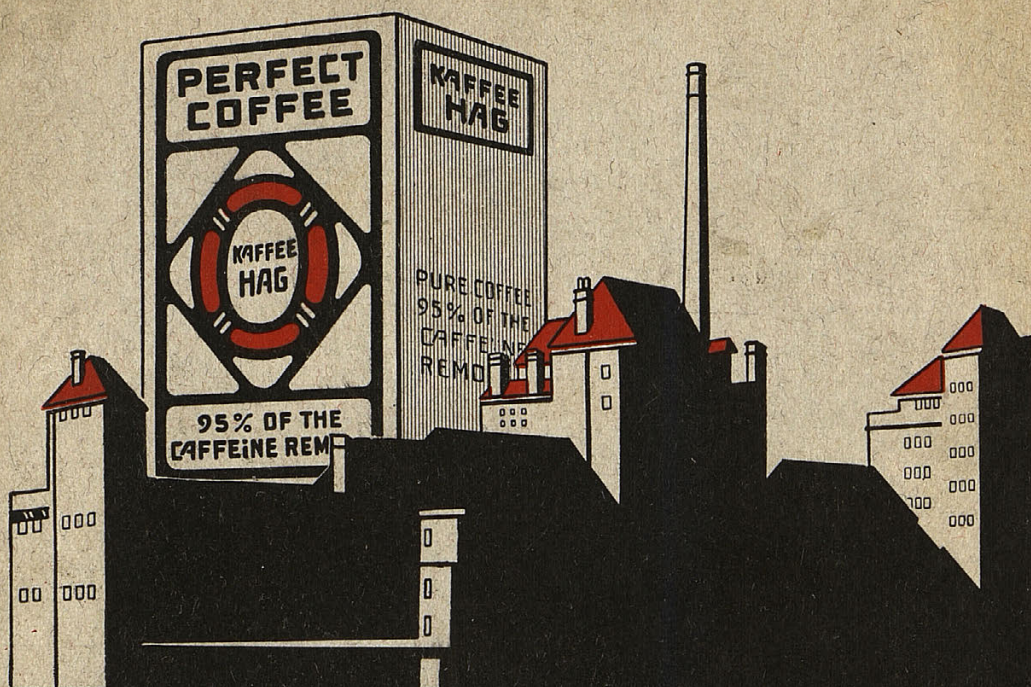
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